

# **IRAN-US (UNITED STATES) RELATIONS SINCE 1945**

**Submitted by**

**MD. ABUL KALAM AZAD**

[Ph.D. Registration No. 81 (Re-reg.), Session: 2014-2015]

**to the University of Dhaka for the Award of the Degree of  
Doctor of Philosophy in Islamic History and Culture**



**FACULTY OF ARTS  
UNIVERSITY OF DHAKA**

**September, 2017**

**IRAN-US (UNITED STATES) RELATIONS  
SINCE 1945**

## **Notes**

The acronym of the United States of America is U.S.A., while the acronym of the United States is U.S. or US. Officially the acronym—“U.S.” is in use, and academically both “U.S.” and simply “US” are used in the political context while “America” is used in a historical or cultural context. In this research work US and America have been used interchangeably. Similarly, in the study “Iran” has been used in the political context and “Persia” has been used in historical and cultural perspective. Although the name “Iran” had formally replaced ancient name “Persia” in 1935, I have used modern name Iran to mean ancient Persia, however, Persia is also used in the research work when I quote other and where I see fit. The Soviet Union and Russia have also been used interchangeably in the study. World War I and World War II have been used as WWI and WWII respectively.

In the present research work, I have used a more traditional academic scheme of spelling Persian words or names of personalities. For example, among several versions current about Mohammad Mosaddeq’s names I prefer the style “Mosaddeq” instead of Mossadeq or Mosaddegh since it sounds best fitted with Persian spelling. However, when I quote or cite others, I have kept their spellings of Persian words and names of personalities as they occur.

## **IRAN-US (UNITED STATES) RELATIONS SINCE 1945**

### *ABSTRACT*

The principal aim of this research work is to contribute towards the understanding of the history of Iran-US relations since 1945 through representation of an analysis in the light of contemporary historical facts. In the contemporary world the history of Iran-US relations is a vital factor of great and growing significance. Before the 1979 Islamic Revolution in Iran both Tehran and Washington had enjoyed positive relations since the establishment of their diplomatic relations in 1883. The post-WWII crisis in Azerbaijan, better known as the Iranian Crisis of 1945-46, placed the US to the cockpit of Iranian affairs. Since then Iran-US relations developed steadily on the basis of mutual understanding. Before taking this kind of relationship a consolidated form, the US intelligence CIA funded and orchestrated the 1953 coup d'état that overthrew the popular and nationalist Prime Minister Dr. Mohammad Mosaddeq of Iran. This US intervention in Iranian politics left a permanent scar on the Iranians which has been hugely affecting Iran-US relationship. Paradoxically, known as one of the key events of Iran-US relations, the 1953 coup d'état opened the door for rapid expansion and close bilateral relations on the state-to-state level between Iran and US while strained relations remained in the background. In 1979 when the world's most popular Revolution took place in Iran in the form of anti-Shah and anti-American demonstration and brought the Islamic government of Imam Ayatullah Khomeini to power, the close Iran-US relations came to a sudden halt. After 1979 Iran-US relations have been hostile. Iran has increasingly been the focus of international attention for its uncompromising attitude towards the US. Today, the relationship between the two countries is more complex than ever because of its multi-dimensional characters. Moreover, because of domestic, regional and international dynamics of Iran-US relationship, it is a many-sided history.

In this context, the present research work is accomplished which critically surveys Iran-US relations since 1945 up to the present time from three main dimensional perspectives: political, economic and cultural while other three dimensions namely regional, global and domestic have also been explored and incorporated with the study. However, in the present research work main emphasis has been given to Iran-US political relations. In the end, the study concludes with a prediction for future of Iran-US relations. Optimistically, although there are narrow chances of mending the decade-long hostile relations between Iran and the US, these are some false hopes as the study finds out. Therefore, the present study tries to conclude that despite some positive gestures which are still coming out of some great leaders from both countries to put the enmity once for all these are not enough to make a long-lasting bridge between Iran and the US. Hence, pessimistically, the study makes the final conclusion by highlighting that the internal and external elements in both countries opposed to the reconciliation are waiting like vultures to undo all good things and for sure make a mess of Iran-US relations in the days to come.

## **Acknowledgments**

Any research work of such an important issue—**Iran-US (United States) Relations Since 1945**—covering more than seventy intense years of political, economic and cultural relations necessarily owes more debts of gratitude than can be acknowledged in a few paragraphs. Therefore, I begin by expressing my whole-hearted gratitude to Almighty Allah for His kind favour to me in accomplishing this onerous research study. I shall remain ever grateful to Him for endowing me with the requisite insight, knowledge, and unshakable mental and physical strength to complete and submit this dissertation after working laboriously for several years. I pray Him to accept this as a service for and benefit of mankind.

I owe more than I can express here to one of my respected and role-model teachers Professor Dr. Mohammad Ibrahim for his kind grace to be my research advisor who has exhibited exceptional patience and understanding in guiding me through the whole process. Without his sustained support and guidance this voluminous work would not have been possible. Therefore, I would like to thank him. I must also thank him for his constant encouragement and guidance and continuous support to work independently but not under any stress to complete this elephantine research work. He has also provided me with unflinching courage and sage advice from time to time. He, in fact, is a great source of information. He has helped to dig deeper into the history of Iran-US relations by providing me with some indispensable materials for the research work.

My sincere thanks also go to Professor Dr. Muhammad Tawfiqul Haider, Professor Mahfuzul Islam and Professor Dr. Muhammad Siddiqur Rahman Khan for their serious and valuable advice during my research period. I am also highly indebted to my respected teachers and other colleagues of the Department of Islamic History and Culture for their constructive criticism, meaningful discussion, important suggestion and incisive and thoughtful comments during the paper presentations sessions held twice in the presence of Academic Committee of the Department. They are: Professor Dr. Habiba Khatun, Professor Dr. Ayesha Begum, Professor A K M Idris Ali, Professor Dr. Nazma Begum, Professor Dr. Md. Akhtaruzzaman (current Acting Vice-Chancellor of the University), Professor Dr. Md. Ataur Rahman Miazi (current Chairman of the Department), Professor Dr. Md. Mosarraf Hossain Bhuiyan, Professor Md. Ataur Rahman Biswas, Professor, Dr. A K M Golam Rabbani, Professor Dr. Abdul Basir, Mrs. Nusrat Fatema, A K M Khademul Haque, Muhammad Omor Faruq, Dr. Md. Syfullah, Mr. Md. Zakaria, Mr. Nurul Amin, Mr. ATM Samsuzzuha, Mr. A.K.M. Iftekharul Islam and Mr. Mahmudur Rahman.

I also gratefully thank my colleagues Mr. Humayun Kabir and Mr. Abdur Rahim who took pains to bring some essential and textual books and other essential research materials for my research work from India. I also express my deep appreciation for the valuable assistance and cooperation I have received from the officers and staffs of the Dhaka University Library. Names must be mentioned of Mr. Amanullah, Mr. Ratan Lal, Mr. Almas, Mr. Nurul Haque, and Mr. Nasiruddin. Special mention

must be made of Mr. Md. Alamgir Hussein of the Islamic Republic of Iran's Cultural Centre in Bangladesh for his important assistance during my research work. Thanks must also be given to Mrs. Sajeda Sultana, Assistant Librarian, Seminar Library, Department of Islamic History and Culture, University of Dhaka, and Mr. Hamidur Rahman Tushar, Deputy Librarian, Begum Sufia Kamal National Public Library, Mr. Delwar Hossein of Asiatic Society of Bangladesh, and Mr. Abul Bashar, Assistant Librarian, Seminar Library, Department of Persian Language and Literature. I am fortunate to have intellectual encouragement of my senior colleagues from other Departments of the University of Dhaka who have given me much-needed encouragement and provided me important research materials during the research work. Hence, I am also grateful to Professor Dr. Muhammad Abdus Sabur Khan, Department of Persian Language and Literature.

No researcher is an island and I am not an exception to that. There is a robust literature on the Iran-US relations and the wide range of scholarly works on Iran-US relations have provided me valuable insight to complete this gigantic task. Therefore, I owe a considerable debt to huge number of scholars, writers, experts, foreign policy analysts, political scientists, international theorists, independent journalists, commentators, and others who have examined and cross-examined the foreign policies of Iran and the US and their relationship. I have learned a great deal from their works, and their names are too numerous to list in full, but I am thankful and grateful to all of them.

I cannot but thank my family enough for their years of crucial support and assistance in my educational and research endeavors. To my beloved wife Laboni Azad I owe a special debt of gratitude for her love, patience, encouragement and support during the Ph.D. period. I am also indebted to my three little sons—Saad, Sami and Shaan—who have shown utmost degree of patience when I have deprived them of my love and affection during my research period. Beyond these names, a very good number of friends and well-wishers of mine have helped me lot. Since it is not possible to name all the people who helped in this and other ways, but general indebtedness to all of them must be expressed, hoping that they are aware of my deep gratitude to them. Hence, the names mentioned above in no way exhaust the list of those to whom I am indebted for my present research work.

Last but not least, I am dedicating this piece of work to the departed soul of my mother—late Saleha Begum—whom I can hardly recall for her early departure from this mortal world. The lost memory of my mother is the only asset and guiding-force for me to accomplish the impossible. I must also acknowledge my debt to my aged father—Md. Akin Ali—who had taken all pains to bring up and educate me since my childhood in absence of my loving mother. My debt to him is especially profound because his inspiration for education is still a beacon of hope for me. For that I also dedicate my work to my respected father. At the same time I am dedicating the research work to the souls of the noble peoples who have sacrificed their valuable times and lives for the cause of a better Iran-US relationship for a better world of peace and amity although the cherished goal is yet to be achieved till date.

## DECLARATION

I, hereby, declare that this thesis entitled “**Iran-US (United States) Relations Since 1945**” submitted to the University of Dhaka, Bangladesh, for the Degree of Doctor of Philosophy, is my own work and has been composed by myself and completed under the supervision of Professor Dr. Mohammad Ibrahim, Department of Islamic History and Culture, Faculty of Arts, University of Dhaka. The sources of information and material I have used (including the internet) have been fully identified and duly acknowledged as required in the guidelines. I further affirm that no part or whole of the thesis has been submitted in any form for any other qualification to University of Dhaka or other institutions for any degree or diploma.

My Ph.D. Registration No. is 81 (Re-reg.), Session: 2014-2015.



Md. Abul Kalam Azad  
Assistant Professor  
Department of Islamic History and Culture  
University of Dhaka  
Dated: 20-09-2017

ইসলামের ইতিহাস ও সংস্কৃতি বিভাগ  
ঢাকা বিশ্ববিদ্যালয়  
ঢাকা ১০০০  
ফোন : ৯৬৬১৯০০-৭৩/৬৩৩০



Department of Islamic History & Culture  
University of Dhaka  
Dhaka 1000  
Phone : 9661900-73/6330  
E-mail : ishist\_du@yahoo.com

নং : .....

তারিখ : .....

20 September, 2017

## CERTIFICATE

This is to certify that this thesis entitled “Iran-US (United States) Relations Since 1945” is an original work of research to the best of my knowledge and, therefore, I hereby recommend it to be forwarded to the examiners for thesis report as to its suitability for the award of the Ph.D. degree in Islamic History and Culture by the University of Dhaka.

*Mohammad Ibrahim*  
20.9.2017 A.C.

(Professor Dr. Mohammad Ibrahim)

Supervisor

Department of Islamic History and Culture

University of Dhaka

Dated: 20.9.2017 A.C.



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## List of Abbreviations/Acronyms

AEOI	Atomic Energy Organization of Iran
AIOC	Anglo-Iranian Oil Company
AP	Associate Press
APOC	Anglo-Persian Oil Company
ARMISH	Army Mission
AWACA	Airborne Warning and Control System
BBC	British Broadcasting Corporation
BD	Bangladesh
CARE	Co-operative for American Relief Everywhere
CDI	Committee for a Democratic Iran
CENTO	Central Treaty Organization
CIA	Central Intelligence Agency
CNN	Cable News Network
CW	Chemical Weapons
FBI	Federal Bureau of Investigation
GENMISH	Gendarmerie Military Mission
IAEA	International Atomic Energy Agency
ICJ	International Court of Justice
IMF	International Monetary Fund
IRI	Islamic Republic of Iran
IRNA	Islamic Republic News Agency
IS/ISIS	Islamic State/ Islamic State in Iraq and Syria
MAAG	Military Assistance Advisory Group
MAP	Mutual Assistant Programme
MEK/MKO	Mujaheed-in-e Khalq/ Mujaheed-in-e Khalq Organization
MI6	Military Intelligence 6
MoU	Memorandum of Understanding
NATO	North Atlantic Treaty Organization
NF	National Front
NIOC	National Iranian Oil Company
NSC	National Security Council
OPEC	Organization of Petroleum Exporting Countries
pbuh	peace be upon him
PGSC	Persian Gulf Service Command
RCC	Revolutionary Command Council
SAM	surface-to-air missile
SAVAK	<i>Sazman-e Amniyat Va Ittilaat-e Keshvar</i> (Organization of National Security and Intelligence)
SCIRI	Supreme Council for the Islamic Revolution in Iraq
SIS	Secret Intelligence Service
TOW	tube-launched, optically-tracked, wire-guided
UAE	United Arab Emirates
UN/UNO	United Nations/United Nations Organization
UNSC	United Nations Security Council
US/USA	United States/United States of America
USSR	Union of Soviet Socialist Republics
VOA	Voice of America
WMD	Weapons of Mass Destruction
WWI	World War I
WWII	World War II

# Introduction

## a) Background of the Research

Essentially, relations between Iran [known as Persia<sup>1</sup> until 1935] and the United States<sup>2</sup> (hereinafter US) are many-sided and vary, running the gamut from treaties of friendship and commerce through mutual security arrangements to the establishment of diplomatic relations, then from the development of close bilateral relations to the breakup of their relations with continuous and open hostility. In the present research work, a humble attempt is made to present critical study of Iran-US relations since 1945, which are of utmost importance in the history of contemporary global politics.

Modern Iran is the outgrowth of ancient Persia with its extraordinary history.<sup>3</sup> Home of one of the most ancient civilizations of the Old World and the country of the Lion and the Sun, Iran was an empire and a superpower.<sup>4</sup> The Persian Empire under Kings Cyrus the Great, Darius and Xerxes extended from the Nile River to the Indus River. Overtime, the great Iranian empire crumbled, but its civilization triumphed. Iranian civilization then absorbed waves of invaders more than it was itself transformed. Even Islam took on a unique form when it came in contact with Iran. Despite foreign invasions, wars, religious and social upheavals, and the political designs of European Great Powers namely Britain, France, and Russia in the nineteenth and most part of the twentieth centuries, Iran has maintained its independence and individuality as sturdily as any nation in the world. A non-Arab and only Shi‘ Muslim country in the world Iran is also known for its glorious historical heritage, its literary, artistic, cultural wealth, and its extensive oil resources in the Middle East region. Politically, in the Middle East subsystem, Iran is a major rather than a small power.<sup>5</sup> Iran has occupied a key position in international politics and strategy and continues to do so.

The discovery of oil in 1908 greatly enhanced the strategic importance of the country. In the early 1950s Iran was the fourth largest (following the US, Venezuela, and Soviet Russia),<sup>6</sup> while currently it is the sixth largest (as of 2014), oil producing country of the world following US, Saudi Arabia, Russia, China and Canada.<sup>7</sup> In the present historical literature, Iran is often described as a ‘regional superpower’ because of the country’s significant influence on the Persian Gulf and the Middle East as a whole. Iran’s importance is more vivid in Adam Tarock’s words. He has put: “The importance of Iran to the Middle East, because of its size, population, and political and cultural influence, is often compared with China’s importance to South-East Asia or with that Germany to Europe.”<sup>8</sup> Another expert once observed: “Iran, whether its ruler is the Shah or Khomeini or whoever follows him, has been, is and will be the decisive power in the

[Persian] gulf.”<sup>9</sup> During the WWII (1939-1945) US President Franklin Delano Roosevelt characterized Iran as “The Bridge of Victory”<sup>10</sup> in the Allied war efforts against Hitler’s Germany, while in 1973 President Richard Nixon stated that Iran is a bridge “between the East and West, between Asia and Europe, and for that matter Africa.”<sup>11</sup> Summarily speaking, all these factors clearly indicate the importance of the issue of Iran-US relations. By reason of being one of the two superpowers in action from the inception of the Cold War in 1945 and the world’s single superpower since the end of the Cold War in 1991, the US foreign relations with the Middle Eastern countries, particularly with Iran is no doubt a vital issue.

As expected, both Iran and the US developed and enjoyed cordial and close bilateral relationship before the 1979 Islamic Revolution. However, they have been encountering hostility and mutual enmity in their relations since 1979. There are domestic, regional and global factors involved in this hostile relation between the two countries. The only way to understand the thirty five plus years of confrontational and hostile relations between Iran and the US is to know the entire history of their relationship. Despite the fact that Iran-US relations are hostile since 1979, a consistent theme that is seen in the history of Iran-US foreign affairs is that these two countries are inexplicably tied to each other when it comes to the question of maintaining a peaceful status quo in the Middle East and of pursuing their mutual common interests.<sup>12</sup> Against this backdrop as well as being an interdisciplinary issue it will be very much useful to the academicians, historians and political scientists if the various aspects and dimensions of the issue are explored through this research plan. Hence, this research study entitled “Iran-US (United States) Relations Since 1945”.

#### **b) Objectives**

There is little doubt that the case histories of Iran-US relations are unique but entangled in detail since an enormous chain of historical inter-connections shaped the relationship between the two countries since its origin in 1883. Hence, dealing with the history of Iran-US relations is indeed a challenging and difficult task. However, the present research work makes some important approaches to uncover some unmentioned and unexplored truths about Iran-US relations since 1945. As scholars generally view that the primary task of the historian is to produce data and conduct probes; there are no verdicts, only findings,<sup>13</sup> the principal aim of this research is to present the historical factors and dynamics that have shaped the complex Iran-US relations since 1945 after a thorough examination and cross-examination of historical information. Another principal theme of this research work is to understand the complex history of Iran-US relations examining the various dimensions and decades-long problems for which the two countries are still experiencing poor and hostile relations. Through this research work an attempt is also made

to analyze the salient aspects of Iran-US relations, with emphasis on tactics, levers, and arguments in a shifting international context.

In terms of content and style, it is diplomatic history, but my broader arguments placed in this research work should interest diplomats, historians, political scientists and international theorists as a whole. The study focuses on the internal and external dynamics of Iran-US relations, the central aim of this research work, however, has been the comprehensive and systematic analysis of Iran's relations with the US since 1945. In the words of noted scholar Edward W. Said "No interpretation is without precedents or without some connection to other interpretations."<sup>14</sup> In the light of this statement my research work may not claim a huge qualitative change of the history of Iran-US relations, however, to a considerable degree, it is indeed a new interpretation and reinterpretation of some information and representation of the history of Iran-US relations in more informative and more analytical fashion.

Again, Edward Said has also put: "All knowledge that is about human society, and not about the natural world, is historical knowledge, and therefore rests upon judgment and interpretation."<sup>15</sup> Given the fact, the historical knowledge of Iran-US relations is still a subject to be interpreted in the light of factual truth. From that point of view, this research work is indeed a new interpretation based on information and scholarly works of different learned and distinguished experts on the Middle East affairs and foreign relations of Iran and the US in general and the history of Iran-US relations in particular. The present research undertaking offers new facts and a detailed reexamination of the events and explores the knowledge on that issue more widely to understand the nitty-gritty of the complexity of the history of Iran-US relations. It also reevaluates and challenges many of the fundamental assumptions associated with the history of Iran-US relations since 1945. Particularly, since most historical writings on the bilateral relationship between Iran and the US since 1953 focus exclusively either on misdeeds of the US as a patron-nation in Iran, or since 1979 on audacious behavior of a Third World county Iran with the superpower—the US, and therefore, there prevail some misperceptions regarding Iran-US relations which I will attempt to correct through this study. Hence, the present research work, I firmly believe, will clear up some of the errors and omissions that are currents about some turning points of Iran-US relations, including the 1953 coup d'état, the 1979 Iranian Islamic Revolution and the fall of the US-backed Shah, the 1979-1981 Hostage Crisis, the Iran-Iraq War of 1980-1988 and many more.

### **c) Methodology**

Conventional research methodology has been followed in the course of this research study. Descriptive and analytical methods based on primary and secondary sources have been used. That is, conventionally, in this study an in-depth analysis is carried out through the collection,

collation and sifting of primary and secondary sources and scanning of the difference materials dug up and culled from these sources. At the same time, non-conventional methods are also applied in this research work as this is the latest trend in research works undertaken in the fields of arts, humanities and social sciences.

**d) Review of Sources**

Probably more literature has been written about Iran-US relations than about any other issue of the world till date. Therefore, the literature dealing with Iran-US relations is incredibly huge and ever growing. New research and thinking about this crucial matter are adding new perspectives to the existing literature every day. However, as per the academic norm, this research work entitled “Iran-US (United States) Relations Since 1945” is based on a good number of primary and secondary sources. Primary sources written in both Persian (many of them are now available in English) and English languages. They also include declassified works (archival and documentary sources now also available in the different websites of internet), insightful analysis of contemporary historians, political scientists, diplomatic personalities, Middle Eastern experts, international theorists and scholars on foreign policy of Iran and the US as well as Iran-US relations. The official websites of both the Islamic Republic of Iran and the US contain a huge source of original information about the study. Government declarations, resolutions, speeches of important persons of both countries posted in the respective websites constituted a vital part of the source material of this study. Some of these have also been published in printed forms and by now are easily available.

Equally valuable information found in the numerous state-owned and private newspapers of both Iran and the US has been used for the study as original sources. Other prominent contemporary daily newspapers, memoirs, official speeches, statements, articles, periodicals and books published since early twentieth century to 2016 have also been used for the relevant information. Of course, since the 1945 a spate of books, dissertations, articles, commentary and news on Iran-US relations has appeared. I have tried to use all these sources objectively to show how the Iran-US relationship from 1945 continues to move by changing its courses from time to time affecting both regional and international matters and the matters related to the attitudes, internal and external policies of the two countries.

Without a doubt, studies of Iran-US relations are indeed critical. Particularly, understanding some turning points of Iran-US relations, including the 1953 coup d'état, the Hostage Crisis of 1979-1981, the US role in the Iran-Iraq War, and Iran's nuclear programme and the US-Israeli reactions to it requires reviewing of sources very carefully and objectively. However, to contend that some true stories of some momentous events like the 1953 coup d'état, the 1979-1981 Hostage Crisis, the US policy in the Iran-Iraq War etc. are now available in the internet as

declassified archival documents. The contemporary nature of the subject and the fact that we are witnessing history in the making, has called for the use of potential internet sources. In fact, today, internet has become the goldmine of information for the researchers. Due to the internet facilities, I have had a rare access to a large number of published and unpublished documents including books, articles of esteemed global journals, and dissertations. Moreover, because of easily accessible to the official websites of both Iranian and the US governments I have got unique opportunity to use some original sources of the study and thus I have been able to use diverse sources of information to reconstruct some turning points of Iran-US relations in the proper historical perspective. In view of the importance of the subject-matter, I have to draw on a plethora of documents, critical studies and analysis on foreign relations of Iran and the US since 1945.

**e) Transliteration, References, Calendar and Translation**

**Transliteration**

Some Persian words (for example, *na shargi*, *na gharbi*) have been transliterated followed by English meaning. These have been typed in *Italic* form.

**References**

The method developed in the *MLA Handbook for Writers of Research Papers* by Joseph Gibaldi and Walter S. Achtert, New York, Modern Language Association, Fourth Edition, 1996, has been used for citing in notes and references and bibliography as well. While referring to an article from a journal its volume, number, publication year and page have been specified in this way: Robert J. Einhorn, 'A Transatlantic Strategy on Iran's Nuclear Program', *The Washington Quarterly*, Vol. 4, No. 27, Autumn 2004, p. 32.

**Calendar**

In the entire research work English Calendar, based on the birth of Jesus Christ and commonly used world-wide as a convenient measurement of time, has been used. Therefore, it has not been indicated by the abbreviation A.D. (Anno Domini) or A.C. (After Christ) or C.E. (Christian Era/ Common Era) as it is a common calendar.

**Translation**

As most source materials consulted and used for the present study are in English language, no major translations have been necessary.

**f) Structure of the Thesis**

The history of Iran-US relations is full of dramatic dimensions and can be divided into four general phases since its inception in 1883. The first phase began with the formal establishment of Iran-US relations in 1883 and lasted until 1945, which is commonly regarded as the formative



years.<sup>16</sup> The second phase spans between 1945 and 1953 when US active involvement in Iranian affairs resulted in the 1953 coup d'état. Although after the 1953 coup d'état the previous cordial and friendly relationship between Iran and the US turned sour, but ironically it ushered in the third phase in the history of Iran-US relations, the period of close Iran-US relations under the Shah whom the US reinstalled in power through the coup. The fourth and last phase of Iran-US relations starts in 1979 when the US-supported Iran's ruler Mohammad Reza Shah's (1953-1979, hereinafter the Shah) regime collapsed. Since then both Iran and the US have been experiencing adversarial relationship which continues till today. To adequately understand the developments, different phases and the overall labyrinth of Iran-US relations, they must be examined within a chronological progression. Hence, to facilitate the present research work, I have divided the era under review into four distinct periods: 1883-1945 (as background study), 1945-1953, 1953-1979 and a period since 1979.

As the historical analysis and evaluation of the multi-dimensioned character of Iran-US relations are the main foci of this research work, I have approached the bilateral relationship between the two countries from 1945 on three levels: domestic, regional and international and from 1979 on four levels: domestic, ideological, regional and international. Of these dimensions, this research work will examine three aspects: political, economic and cultural. Hence to understand the continuity and changes in Iran-US relations and for the purposes of analysis of the history of Iran-US relations since 1945, the whole research work has been divided into **eight chapters**, with chapters two, three, four, and five containing **sections** for technical reasons. **First five** chapters deal with the Iran-US **diplomatic and political** relations since 1945. Of them **Chapter 1** investigates origins and development of bilateral relationship between Iran and the US of this period of time. Since the establishment of Iran-US diplomatic relations in 1883 American interest in Iran was almost entirely restricted to concerns with the well-being of the US missionaries in Iran and this trend continued up until the WWII as part of US policy of isolationism. As a consequence, the early history of Iran-US relations was marked by the sharp absence of US involvement in Iranian affairs, although the Iranians generally regarded the US as an almost selfless power—"the protector of world peace".<sup>17</sup>

Following the Allied occupation of Iran in 1941, the US became involved in Iran in 1942 and a new direction of US policy thus constituted the background of Iran-US relations during the WWII.<sup>18</sup> Entitled 'Iran-US Relations: 1945-1953' **Chapter 2** comprises three sections which analyzes in some detail the history of Iran-US diplomatic and political relations during the 1945-1953 period highlighting the Iranian Crisis of 1945-1946, the Anglo-Iranian oil dispute of 1951-1953 and the CIA-engineered 1953 coup d'état. Following the end of WWII in 1945 the US was drawn into the vortex of turbulent Iranian politics and as a result, the US emerged as a major

actor in Iranian affairs. With this development the real progress was made in Iran-US relations since mid-1940s when US became progressively more involved in Iran politically, militarily and economically. As a result, the Iran-US relations quickly evolved as a major bond of relationship during 1945-1951 period. **Chapter 3**, 'Iran-US Relations: 1953-1979', which has five sections, critically surveys the Iran-US relations extending the period between 1953 and 1979. Following the 1953 coup d'état which was masterminded by the American CIA and the British MI6, the new government of Iran and its leaders (the Shah and Prime Minister Fazlullah Zahedi) promised to maintain satisfactory relations with the US. Thus began a close bilateral relationship between Iran and the US in a client-patron fashion. Section I deals with this Iran-US client-patron relationship of 1953-1969 period. Since 1969 the client-patron relations between Iran and the US turned into special and partnership relations based on Nixon Doctrine's "twin pillars" strategy. Iran-US special and partnership relations lasted only a decade (1969-1979) and **Section II** critically pen-pictures this Iran-US special and partnership relationship. **Section III** looks at the Iran-US military relations that developed during the period of 1953-1979, in face of threats posed by the Soviet communism and Arab radicalism.

Alongside these kinds of bilateral Iran-US relations, there developed an unusual strained relationship between Tehran and Washington. **Section IV** sheds light on Iran-US strained relations of the 1953-1979 period, much ignored area in Iran-US relations. After 1953 coup, majority Iranians were not pleased with the Shah whom the US reinstated on the throne in 1953. They also hated the Shah's backer—the US. As a result, they waged a violent demonstration against the US-backed Shah in 1963. Initially suppressed, but reappeared more violently in the late 1970s, the anti-Shah demonstrations took anti-American character because of unwanted US interference in Iranian politics, foreign affairs, economy and culture since 1953. At one point, anti-Americanism became the driving factor for anti-Shah movement since 1977 and made the 1979 Islamic Revolution inevitable which caused the fall of the Washington-supported Shah and thus put an end to apparently Iran-US intimate relations of the 1953-1979 period. **Section V** has dealt with Iran-US relations in the context of the 1979 Islamic Revolution. The fall of the Shah of Iran, a key US ally in 1979 opened a long rift in Iran-US relations, and since then a new phase of hostile and unsettled Iran-US relations began which is still in current. In foreign affairs, the revolutionary and post-revolutionary era has become unique, at least, for the Islamic Republic of Iran's "go-alone" policy with a hostile relationship with the US and vice-versa. Moreover, the US attitude toward Iran became more antagonistic after two events: first following the US Embassy take-over in Tehran on November 4, 1979, and second, after the dismissal of the provisional government by Ayatullah Imam Khomeini when he accepted resignation of Mehdi Bazargan on November 5, 1979. While Iran became more hostile to the US during the Iran-Iraq War as the US backed Iraq in the war. These all things along with other related issues will be

investigated at full length in three different sections of **Chapter 4** under the title of ‘Iran-US Relations: The Khomeini Era (1979-1989)’. **Section I** of chapter 4 deals with low-intensity hostile Iran-US relations covering a period between February 1979 and November 1979. **Section II** focuses on the Hostage Crisis of 1979-1981 with its eventual effects on subsequent Iran-US relations. **Section III** critically and empirically analyzes the Iran-US relations during and after the Iran-Iraq War of 1980-1988. It draws a conclusion on how the US policy in the war has affected the future course of Iran-US relations and then looks at the Iran-US relations during Khomeini’s last days before died on June 3, 1989.

**Chapter 5** which contains three **Sections** looks into the ins and outs of Iran-US relations from the post-Khomeini transition period to the present time. **Section I** is the study of Iran-US relation during the Rafsanjani era of 1988-1997, while **Section II** critically reviews and approaches the history of Iran-US relations during the presidency of Sayyid Mohammad Khatami (1997-2005). Khatami’s new approach towards the world in general and the US in particular helped to break Iran’s isolation from the international community, although Iran-US relations failed to achieve a breakthrough in reconciliation chiefly due to uncompromising position of the US. Since 2005 Iran-US relations witnessed another phase of confrontational relations under Iran’s President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad (2005-2013) and US President George W. Bush (2001-2009). **Section III** deals with Iran-US relations since 2005 which includes Iran’s nuclear programme and the US attitude towards it. Now-a-days Iran’s nuclear programme has become an important issue of debate in the international affairs. This issue has also become an important element of present-day Iran-US relations. Because of its importance Iran’s nuclear programme has been elaborated in the light of Iran-US relations and how US ally—‘militant Israel’<sup>19</sup> has been poisoning the US and the Iran-US relations.

Finally, it would be an incomplete study of Iran-US relations by solely referring to political and historical factors and by throwing light only on political aspects of the relationship of the two countries. Therefore, the present research work encompasses the study of Iran-US economic and cultural interactions since 1945, although in a very limited scale. Hence, **Chapter 6** sheds light on the Iran-US **economic** relations while **Chapter 7** accounts the history of the Iran-US **cultural** relations since 1945. **Chapter 8** is a reflective concluding chapter which sums up the whole study by drawing important observations with future speculations of Iran-US relations.

## Notes and References of Introduction

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1. “Persia” is derived from the classical “Persis” which signifies the province of Pars or Parsa, the Arabicized form of which is Fars—the seventh *ostan* or province of modern Iran. The word “Iran”, on the other hand, is derived from the “Airiya” of the Avesta and signifies the “land of the Aryans” or

- “Illustrious”. In Sasanian times, when the vast Iranian empire was at its zenith it was called *Iranshahr*. The country was officially named “Iran” to replace the Hellenistic name of Persia in March 1935.
2. Former British colony and a country of North America declared its independence in 1776 and emerged as an independent nation through a protracted struggle of eight years and subsequent Treaty of Paris in 1783. In the following century the United States experienced the most traumatic challenge of its own: the Civil War of 1860s. Later on, buoyed by the victories in the WWI and WWII and long drawn Cold War in 1991 (since 1945), the US remains the world’s most powerful nation state. See: ‘CIA-The World Factbook’, <https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/geos/us.html>
  3. John A. Boyle (ed.), *Persia: History and Heritage*, George Allen & Unwin publishers, London, 1978, p. 17.
  4. For more see: Kenneth M. Pollack, *The Persian Puzzle: The Conflict between Iran and America*, Random House, New York, 2004, pp. 3-6; Barry Rubin, *Paved with Good Intentions: The American Experience and Iran*, Penguin Books, New York, 1981, p. 4.
  5. Shahrām Chubin and Sepēhr Zabih, *The Foreign Relations of Iran: A Developing State in a Zone of Great-Power Conflict*, University of California Press, Berkeley, USA, 1974, p. 22.
  6. Donald N. Wilber, *Iran: Past and Present*, Princeton University Press, USA, 1955, pp. 133-134.
  7. CNN, World’s Top Oil Producers, <http://money.cnn.com/interactive/news/economy/worlds-biggest-oil-producers/>; Accessed on May 22, 2013.
  8. Paul J. White and William S. Logan (ed.), *Remaking the Middle East*, Berg Publishers, England, 1997, p. 199. See also: Haim Shaked and Itamar Rabinovich (ed.), *The Middle East and the United States: Perceptions and Policies*, Transaction Books, USA, 1980, p. 173.
  9. Quoted in William A. Dorman and Mansour Farhang, *The U.S. Press and Iran: Foreign Policy and the Journalism of Deference*, University of California Press, USA, 1988, p. 23. See also: Gary Sick, ‘US interest in Iran and US-Iran Policy,’ in *US-Iran Relations: Area of Tension and Mutual Interest* (ed.), Hooshang Amir Ahmadi and Eric Hooglund, The Middle East Institute, USA, 1994, p.15.
  10. Hossein Fardoust, *The Rise and Fall of Pahlavi Dynasty: Memoirs of General Fardoust*, Hadis Publishing House, Tehran, Iran, 1995, p. 91.
  11. Rouhollah K. Ramazani, *Iran’s Foreign Policy, 1941-1973: A Study of Foreign Policy in Modernizing Nations*, University Press of Virginia, Charlottesville, USA, 1975, p. vii.
  12. The overthrow of Taliban regime in Afghanistan in 2001 is case in point here. See also: Kevin Ducharme, “Prospects for Temptation in Persia by “The Great Satan”: United States Engagement with Iran (1993-2005)”, Thesis, March, 2010, p. 7.
  13. Darioush Bayandor, *Iran and the CIA: The Fall of Mosaddeq Revisited*, Palgrave MacMillan, Hampshire, Great Britain, p. xvi.
  14. Edward W. Said, *Covering Islam: How the Media and the Experts Determine How We See the Rest of the World*, Vintage, London, 1997, p. 163.
  15. *Op., cit.*, p. 162.
  16. Mehdi Heravi, *Iranian-American Diplomacy*, Ibex Publishers, Inc. USA, 1999, p. 1.
  17. Homa Katouzian, ‘The Campaign against the Anglo-Iranian Agreement of 1919’, *British Journal of Middle Eastern Studies*, Vol. 25, No. 1, May, 1998, p. 8.
  18. George Lenczowski, *Russia and the West in Iran, 1918-1948: A Study in Big-Power Rivalry*, Cornell University Press, New York, 1949, p. 263.
  19. The term “militant Israel” in its present use, is borrowed from *The Foreign Policies of the Middle East States*, (ed.) by Raymond Hinnebusch and Anoushiravan Ehteshami, p. 18. I have chosen to use the term—militant Israel—on the ground that the state of Israel was born by exterminating and evicting the Palestinian Arabs and the process is still on while it puts blame on the Palestinian side when the Palestinians responds helplessly with minor retaliation. Additionally, Israel is the only exception in the globe which was established as a Zionist nation without fixed borders while its illegal occupation continues unabated till today generating fear in the minds of millions of Palestinians as well as the inhabitants of Israel’s neighboring states.

# Chapter 1

## Iran-US Relations: Historical Background (up to 1945)

### Introduction

Historically, Iran-US relations began through the cultural ties initiated by the American Presbyterian Christian missionaries in Iran in the early 1830s.<sup>1</sup> Relations on commercial and diplomatic level began in the mid-1850s and the early 1880s respectively. Then Iran-US relations followed a course of slow development that continued prior to the beginning of the WWII (1939-1945) in 1939. Surprisingly, the WWII brought a new change in Iran-US relations which continued up to 1945. This chapter is aimed at providing a historical background of Iran-US relations covering the period from 1883 to 1945, also known as the formative years of Iran-US relations.

### The Rationale of Iran-US Relations

As history documents, of the two nations: Iran and the US, Iranians were much more familiar with both the Americans and their country than Americans were with Iran.<sup>2</sup> Arthur C. Millspaugh, who worked as a second and third US financial advisor in Iran from 1922 to 1927 and from 1943 to 1944 respectively has put: “Up to the second World War, the Land of the Lion and the Sun lay beyond the political horizon and almost outside the knowledge of the United States. In spite of this fact, or rather because of it, America and Americans had won in the Persian mind and in Persian hopes a special reputation and a unique relationship.”<sup>3</sup> Kamyar Ghaneabassiri, who has studied the US foreign policy in Iran during the period of 1856-1921, notes that this reputation the US won was due to the American missionaries’ activities in Iran during the early Qajar rule (1794-1925). With some exception, the benevolent activities of the missionaries helped convince the Iranians that the US was sympathetic to Iran.<sup>4</sup> It was during the early Qajar rule Iran succumbed to two European powers: Great Britain and Russia. The two countries, having the strongest foothold in the domestic and international affairs of Iran and having secured their geo-strategic position in the north (Russia) and in the south on the Persian Gulf (Britain) exploited the country at will throughout the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries and first quarter of the twentieth century.<sup>5</sup> Thus devastated by the political and economic ruin caused by the Anglo-Russian exploitation, particularly since the second quarter of the nineteenth century, Iran was psychologically prepared to accept the assistance and friendship of any strong third power sufficiently distant not to endanger its political integrity.

Iranians considered the US a source of assistance untainted by great power politics and saw the country as a powerful potential ally. A Middle East scholar has observed that in the early

part of the nineteenth century, both “Americans and Iranians came to believe that indeed the United States—with its growing power and yet with no national interest in Persia’s resources—might come to play some special, beneficial role in rescuing Persia from its humiliating servitude and in restoring it to some semblance of past glory.”<sup>6</sup> Contrarily, the US was seen reluctant to involve in Iran because of its non-involvement policy,<sup>7</sup> however, the US felt that a sort of relationship with Iran was necessary and this feeling was intensified in the early 1880s when the Kurdish raids in the northern provinces of Iran made lives of the American missionaries insecure. It was to protect these missionaries that the US government felt the necessity to establish diplomatic relations with Iran.

### **The Origin and Slow Development of Iran-US Relations**

As stated above, Iran-US relationship began its long journey through the cultural ties initiated by the US Protestant Christian missionaries who were sent to Iran in 1830 by the US government. The first American missionaries to visit Iran were Harrison Gray, Otis Dwight, and Eli Smith who arrived in Tabriz on December 18, 1830. They were sent with the task of converting Iranian Shi‘i Muslims (though covert in nature but through periodic attempts) from Islam to Christianity and the Assyrian and Nestorian Christians to Protestantism. This was actually the primary objective of the American missionaries, while providing medicine and education to the Iranians, especially the Iranian Christian minority, was their secondary objective.<sup>8</sup> However, encouraged by the early contacts, Iran was seen to eager to strengthen the bilateral relationship with the US. Iran’s objective in this regard was to counterbalance the Anglo-Russian ascendancy in Iran. With this view in mind and influenced by the reformist Prime Minister Mirza Taqi Khan Amir Kabir (1848-1851) Iranian ruler Nasiruddin Shah (1848-1896) approached to the US recognizing Washington’s growing importance in the world arena.<sup>9</sup> In 1854, the Iranian government sought a treaty with the US as a means of protecting Iran against foreign aggression—chiefly that of Great Britain in the Persian Gulf. Then early in 1855, an Iranian diplomat submitted to the US minister at Vienna a draft treaty through which Iran sought the help of US naval forces to protect the Iranian marine and some islands and ports “from the preponderance” of an unnamed power indicating Great Britain.

Iran even considered the possibility of an Iran-US military alliance against Great Britain and sought to purchase warships from the US in order to patrol its Persian Gulf coast.<sup>10</sup> As the US was reluctant to involve in Iran politically, it showed little interest in Iranian gesture. However, by this time the US trade in the Persian Gulf region had grown so extensively that US government had to start true negotiations with Iran for a commercial treaty. Iran seized the opportunity and signed a Treaty of Friendship and Commerce with the US in Constantinople on December 13, 1856.<sup>11</sup> Analysts view that the treaty was the first formal relation between Iran and the US. It set a precedent for further US participation in Iran.<sup>12</sup> Iran quickly moved to

establish political or diplomatic relations with the US. To that end it dispatched Mirza Abul Hasan Khan Ilchi Kabir Shirazi to Washington, D.C. as its first diplomatic envoy to US who later requested the US government to safeguard Iranian independence from Anglo-Russian aggression.<sup>13</sup> Disillusionment quickly followed since the US did not follow the Iranian example. After more than two decades later during the Kurdish raids of early 1880s in northern Iran the US government became concerned about the lives and security of its citizens working there as missionaries. In this context, the US government first requested the British government for the protection of its citizens in the troubled area and then came up with the final and concrete decision to establish formal diplomatic relations with Iran. Full diplomatic relations were thus established between Iran and the US in 1883. S.G.W. Benjamin (1883-1885) of New York was appointed as the first US official diplomatic envoy to Iran.<sup>14</sup>

Ironically, the formal diplomatic relations between Iran and the US that began in 1883 remained slight and insignificant, and it was limited to exchanging of various pleasantries between the two governments, which is to say virtually nonexistent until the turn of the nineteenth century chiefly due to the US non-interventionist policy in Iran.<sup>15</sup> However, Iran left no stone unturned to involve US in Iranian political affairs. In October 1888 Iran approached to US and urged the country to expand its commercial and diplomatic ties with Iran. Iran's diplomatic envoy in Washington called for an Iran-US alliance against continued Anglo-Russian interference in Iranian affairs during his first meeting with the President Stephen Grover Cleveland (1885-1889 and 1893-1897). In response, the President maintained his country's isolationist mold and refused to break it, obviously not to become a party to the Anglo-Russian rivalry in Iran. By 1906, Iran witnessed a Constitutional Revolution which was the first revolution of its kind to occur in modern Iranian history.<sup>16</sup> Iranians hoped that the US would help Iran free itself from the draconian domination of Great Britain and Russia. But like before, the US response was total abstention from interference in the internal affairs of Iran. Unsupportive and unsympathetic to the Constitutional Revolution, the US government remained unmoved during this history-shaping event for the official US stance was non-interventionist although the events of Constitutional movement of Iran got substantial coverage in US newspapers.<sup>17</sup>

However, when a July 1909 mass uprising of the Constitutionals forced Muhammad Ali Shah to abdicate in favour of his eleven-year-old son Crown Prince Ahmad, the US government hastened to recognize the new regime in line with its established policy of *de facto* recognition. Later in a surprising move, the US responded in kind and sent financial advisors under the leadership of Morgan Shuster to help redress the Iran's chaotic economy after such a request was made by the Constitutional government of Iran (see also chapter 6). This economic mission won the US an undeserved reputation for supporting Iranian

independence and liberal institutions. However, in face of Anglo-Russian vehement opposition, the US economic mission in Iran was forced to end its activities. Some analysts view that although the US propagated a positive image of itself as a sympathetic nation and appreciated the Iranians for the very idea that the US nominally embraced-constitutionalism and democracy while in fact, it had no intention of assisting Iran.<sup>18</sup>

As time progressed, Iran-US relations were seen to develop slowly through other factors which are discussed under following sub-headings.

**a. Iran-US Relations between the Two World Wars**

Upon the outbreak of the WWI the Iranian government declared its neutrality in November 1914. However, the country was quickly overrun by Anglo-Russian and Turkish forces and thus the country suffered all the horrors of war. The US maintained very little official contact with Iran during the war years and the Iran-US contacts were largely on a private basis. In the wake of the war, US began to modify its traditional policy of non-involvement in the political and economic affairs of Iran. On December 17, 1917 and in 1918 when Iran made two requests to US to secure for Iran representatives in the Paris Peace Conference, which was to convene at the end of the war the US took Iran's requests sympathetically. But the US made no further attempt to press the issue because it wanted to avoid any risk of jeopardizing its relationship with Great Britain who was still a dominant foreign power in Iran. Surprisingly, when Britain masterminded a plan, bribed the Iranian leaders and concluded secretly the notorious Anglo-Iranian Agreement (because if ratified it actually would turn Iran into a virtual British protectorate) on August 9, 1919 in London,<sup>19</sup> Washington protested loudly and publicly despite the fact that it still chose to regard Iran as a British sphere of interest.<sup>20</sup> President Woodrow Wilson himself responded angrily. Why did the US openly criticize the agreement and champion Iran's independence challenging the Anglo-Iranian agreement? Was it because of "Wilsonian idealism"<sup>21</sup> or anything else? From an impartial point of view it may safely be concluded that it was during this time US was pushing the interests of its oil companies to develop the northern oil fields in Iran following the Soviet withdrawal in 1917-1918.<sup>22</sup> Consequently, in its opposition to the Anglo-Iranian agreement the US displayed a surprising measure of support for Iran, however, this US position gained for the country much prestige and support in Iran and made US popular in Iran.<sup>23</sup>

By the time WWI ceased Iran was in a state of absolute political anarchy with a danger of disintegration—a condition that remained subsequent two years and by 1920 it was a classic "failed state".<sup>24</sup> Against this backdrop, on February 21, 1921, with the tacit consent of the British,<sup>25</sup> a nationalist commander of the Cossack Brigade<sup>26</sup> by name of Reza Khan conducted a bloodless coup d'état. The 1921 coup d'état in Iran coincided with the growing US interests



in the Middle East which were political, economic, and security based. Although the US Legation in Iran remained, to some extent, skeptical of the 1921 change-over but on occasion publicly opposed the British machinations in Iran, however, the US government tried to find out good candidates of the needed ally in the region in nationalist Reza Khan to get secured its interests in the Middle East. It was in this background Reza Khan abolished the Qajar dynasty in 1925 by deposing the last Qajar ruler Ahmad Shah. Soon he crowned himself Shahanshah (King of Kings)—in the style of his hero Napoleon. Thenceforth Reza Khan was referred to as Reza Shah. The US government recognized the new government of Reza Shah and instructed its diplomatic envoy in Iran to conduct the affairs of the legation with the government of Reza Shah.<sup>27</sup> Meanwhile, during the murder of a US Vice Consul Robert W. Imbrie on July 18, 1924 appeared as a temporary setback to the slow-developing Iran-US diplomatic relations as the US reacted strongly and wanted a quick adjustment of the incident. However, the Imbrie episode did not prevent US from supporting Reza Shah's efforts to consolidate power since the US needed a political ally in the region. In this way, overall US policy helped to lay the foundation of the Pahlavi Monarchy and favored the emergence of Reza Shah primarily in the hope that he would be able to stiffen Iranian resistance to Communist expansion, and secondarily, to safeguard the US interests in Iran.<sup>28</sup>

For his part, Reza Shah made an all-out effort to reach out to the US in the hope that Iran could use the US as balancer to the Soviet Union and Britain. However, Iran-US diplomatic relations showed no sign of major improvement. This course of Iran-US political relationship had to survive a couple of crises since the mid-1930s. In November 1935 Iranian diplomatic envoy in the US by the name of Jalal Gafar was arrested in rural Maryland for a traffic violation.<sup>29</sup> The incident appeared as a major point of contention to ongoing Iran-US relations. The Iranian government viewed the incident as an assault on Iran's integrity and requested an investigation and demanded apology from the US government which the latter refused. The press in the US complicated the matter highlighting the fault of the Iranian embassy and accusing the Iranian Minister of smuggling. The allegations were entirely unfounded and were never proven. Only a few months later after the short-lived arrest of Iranian Minister in the US, the *New York Daily Mirror* published an article criticizing Reza Shah's harsh rule in Iran. The weekly also claimed that "Reza Shah had once been employed as a stable boy at the British legation."<sup>30</sup> Reportedly, noticing the unhappiness of the US government because of Iran's growing and close relationship with Germany, the *New York Daily Mirror* published that critical article. As expected, the article produced massive anger Reza Shah who later suspended Tehran's diplomatic relations with Washington. Therefore, there were no formal diplomatic relations between Iran and the US for more than two years from January 1936 to December 1938. Nonetheless, Iran-US diplomatic relations survived

with the restoration of the US good standing. Realizing the negative consequences of growing Iran-Germany ties on the eve of the WWII, the US took initiative to mend the broken relationship with Iran. Towards the end of 1938, US officially offered apology to Iran for past events. Iran responded positively and in early 1939 diplomatic relationship between Iran and the US was restored.

**b. Iran vis-à-vis WWII (1939-1945): The Allied Occupation of Iran and the Beginning of US Involvement**

History documents that it was WWII that marked the first large-scale contact between Iran and the US with the emergence of US interest in Iran. The onset of WWII and subsequent Allied occupation of Iran provided a unique opportunity for the US to become a key player in Iranian politics and in this way, relations between the two countries began to develop steadily.<sup>31</sup> This was a major shift in their relations from the slow-developing phases of the past. Upon the outbreak of WWII in Europe in 1939, Iran promptly proclaimed its neutrality. But the German invasion of the Soviet Union in the code-named Operation Barbarossa on June 22, 1941, highlighted the strategic importance of Iran to the Allied Powers.<sup>32</sup> In conjunction with Iran's important location as the country provided one of the vital and practical routes (functioned in all four seasons of the year) for supply war materials (munitions and food) from the Persian Gulf to the Soviet Union, the Allied powers were also aware of the importance of the country's oil resource. In this context, as the war was unfolding the Anglo-Russian powers invaded Iran on August 25, 1941 and divided Iran into two zones of occupation.<sup>33</sup>

President Franklin D. Roosevelt (1933-1945), who characterized Iran as "The Bridge of Victory" in the Allied war efforts against Hitler's Germany soon approved the Anglo-Russian invasion in Iran on August 14, 1941 because of "overwhelming military necessity" during the war.<sup>34</sup> However, in the wake of the Allied occupation of Iran, Reza Shah made a direct telegram call to US President Roosevelt on the evening of August 25, and requested that the US use its good offices to restrain the invaders. In his telegram, Reza Shah asked the President "to take efficacious and urgent humanitarian steps to put an end to these acts of aggression." In reply, on September 2, 1941, President Roosevelt wrote to Reza Shah assuming that the Anglo-Russian governments had "no designs on the territorial independence and integrity of Iran".<sup>35</sup> However, Reza Shah had to abdicate on September 16, 1941, under British pressure on charge of assisting Germany. The Allies then allowed Reza Shah's 22-year son, Mohammad Reza Pahlavi (hereinafter referred to as the Shah) to continue rule Iran. The new Shah took the throne of Iran on September 20, 1941. The US who had watched this changeover now wanted to involve Iran in the war effort. Therefore, the US urged Britain and Russia not to act as mere occupants.<sup>36</sup> Against this backdrop, a Tripartite

Treaty of Alliance between Iran, Great Britain and the Soviet Union was concluded on January 29, 1942. Under the terms of the treaty Iran joined the Allies in the war against the Axis powers while the British and the Soviets pledged to respect the territorial integrity, sovereignty and political independence of Iran and agreed that their troops would be withdrawn from Iran no later than six months after war with the Axis powers had come to an end. In return Iran promised to co-operate with the Allies during the wartime but Iran was not required to bear arms against Germany. Although Iranian government told the US to adhere to the Tripartite Treaty of Alliance, the US did not become a party to the treaty.

This actually frustrated the Iranian political leaders, however, they looked to the US as a 'third force' in the belief that the US would help maintain their nation's independence if the Anglo-Russian powers put their country's sovereignty at stake. While the young Shah's deep-seated suspicion of the British in removing his father from power together with his unabated anti-Soviet sentiments also drew him closer to the US. Evidences are available that since October 1941, the Shah approached the American Minister in Tehran for an alliance with the US. He blamed "bad advisers" for the failures of his father, stated his own intention to "govern constitutionally and look after the welfare of his people," and, above all, declared enthusiastically that he "would be very happy to be an ally of America."<sup>37</sup> Iran turned to the US also believing that the US was the only nation which was in a position to render effective aid to Iran through providing advisers, technicians, financial and other material support. Moreover, it was during this time Iran badly needed substantial aid, which the Anglo-Soviet powers refused to provide. This certainly created a background for Iran to look increasingly to the US. Meanwhile, realizing that the Anglo-Soviet powers did not have the resources to maintain a critical presence in Iran while at the same time carry on other military campaigns, Britain invited the US to enter Iran. Iran soon became a military base of the WWII for allied powers second to none in importance in grand strategy of the struggle.

### **c. US Assistance Missions in Iran**

Following the US oil companies' explorations in Saudi Arabia since 1933 and US entry into the WWII in 1942, policy-makers in Washington pushed for a more active role in Iran. As a consequence, the US government began to form a serious, forward-looking, long-term policy toward Iran in which it gave emphasis on Iran's oil reserves and geo-strategic position. Since the US considered Iran as a vital to its defence, it started to establish a strong military, diplomatic and eventually economic presence in Iran. At the same time, decision makers in Washington viewed that Iran's independence was of major long-term interest to the US.<sup>38</sup> These all created avenues for US advisors (mostly military) and non-combatants troops to come to Iran from 1942, as part of the Allied war effort as well as to assist Iranian military

and police. By 1943, a good number of major and minor US military, diplomatic, and economic (see chapter 6) missions were seen to operate in Iran, thus giving the Iran-US relations a new dimension. Below is a brief account of these US missions and how they strengthened the developing Iran-US relations during the WWII.

On March 20, 1942, Iran informed the US authorities of its intention to engage a high-ranking American officer to take charge of “entire finance and army supply divisions of the Iranian War Department.” In response, three major US Military Assistance Missions were sent to Iran: first to train and reorganize Iranian Army, second to train and assist the Iranian Gendarmerie or police force and third to coordinate the movement of war materials to Russia. These missions later provided the mechanism by which American influence in Iran became permanent. The first US Military Mission for the Iranian Army began its operations in Iran on June 16, 1942, under US military advisor Major General John N. Greely who was later replaced by Major General Clarence S. Ridely. In August 1942, Secretary of State Cordell Hull announced that aiding the Iranian military “would be helpful in strengthening our position in Iran at the present time and in building a firm foundation for future relations.”<sup>39</sup> Later on, on Iran’s request in October 1944, the US government approved the continuation of the mission beyond March 1, 1945.

The second US military mission was the largest one and broadest in scope. This mission assumed the responsibility of the Lend-Lease assistance to Iran and the Persian Gulf Service Command (hereinafter PGSC). Headed by General Donald H. Connolly 30,000 non-combatant troops of this mission arrived in Iran in December 1942. The stated and primary task of this mission was to operate the southern section of the Trans-Iranian Railway<sup>40</sup> and thus to maintain the supply line transversing Iran to the Soviet Union. However, Halford L. Hoskins, who wrote in 1950, categorically stated that one of the purposes of the US troops to come to Iran was to guard the oil fields,<sup>41</sup> which actually demonstrates the motive of Allied occupation of Iran on August 25, 1941. In addition to supply war materials largely American munitions of war across Iran to the Soviet Union, the PGSC built and reorganized the harbours on the Persian Gulf coast and the Shatt-al Arab waterway, constructed and repaired highways, built airports, and made operation of the Trans-Iranian Railway. The PGSC developed a large and modern seaport at Khorramshahr, other ports at Bandar Abbas, and Bandar Shapur and an airport at Abadan. These works of PGSC in Iran did really represent an outstanding breakthrough regarding the Iran-US relations.

The third military mission was Gendarmerie Military Mission (hereinafter GENMISH). Colonel Herbert Norman Schwarzkopf (father of General Norman Schwarzkopf, the commander of Coalition forces during the Operation Desert Storm in 1991) and 24 police

experts were put in charge of this mission. The GENMISH reorganized, trained, armed and commanded this internal security force of 20,000 men along American lines the Iranian Gendarmerie or rural police became an efficient force.<sup>42</sup> In fact, with the beginning of this third US military mission in Iran the Iran-US military ties were firmly established. Most military transactions between the two countries during the subsequent decades took place in line with these military ties. Later on, the life-span of GENMISH was extended three times through the exchanges of notes on September 6, 1944, and on September 29, 1945, and it continued until the late 1970s. Given such end results of US missions in Iran it may be safely concluded that the long-term purposes of these missions related directly to the Iran-US post-WWII relations.

Alongside the major US assistance missions, other lower-level missions and some American individuals performed important functions and enhanced contacts between the two countries during the WWII. For example, a group led by Joseph Sheridan was also seen active in advising the Iranians on food and supply. The Office of Strategic Services (hereinafter OSS), the forerunner of the Central Intelligence Agency (hereinafter CIA) in Tehran, was working as intelligence group for gathering information, although the military attaché had its special intelligence group directed by Colonel Baker which was active in the provinces of Iran. The OSS constantly reported to Washington that Iranian people were deeply unhappy and angry at Russia and Britain. American advisers also assisted the Iranian government as individual experts in different sectors of the government including irrigation and health matter. Of them, Dr. Bennett Avery was an adviser in public health in 1944, while Professor Luther Winsor assisted in irrigation. Dr. Harold B. Allen of the Near East Foundation spent sometimes in Iran between 1943 and 1944 surveying agricultural education. Thus, the presence and activities of the American advisers helped to constitute an important and positive aspect in the Iran-US relations while the US advisory missions in general completed the establishment of US long-term interests in Iran.

#### **d. The Tehran Conference: A New Turn in Iran-US Relations**

Politically the US government began to show good will and friendliness toward Iran as the war progressed. President Roosevelt had hoped to make Iran a unique example of Big Three cooperation. Basically from this perspective and being suspicious about the intentions of the Anglo-Russian powers in Iran, the US government felt the necessity of a joint statement regarding the improvement of relations between Iran and the Allies. This latter resulted in the signing of the “Declaration of the Three Powers Regarding Iran” on December 1 in 1943. In diplomatic history this event was known as the Tehran Conference of the Soviet Union, Great Britain and the US and this was the brain-child of President Roosevelt. The Tehran Conference took place between November 28 and December 1 in 1943. The leaders of the

three countries namely US President Roosevelt, Russian leader Joseph Stalin (1941-1953), and British Prime Minister Winston Leonard Spencer Churchill (1940-1945 and 1951-1955), signed a Tripartite Tehran Declaration that recognized Iran's services in "transportation of supplies from overseas to the Soviet Union" and promised the country economic aid both during and after the war; reaffirmed its independence, sovereignty, and territorial integrity; and reiterated the Allies' adherence to the principles of the Atlantic Charter.<sup>43</sup> To experts, the Tehran Declaration of the Tehran Conference was a demonstration of US that it had a vital and permanent stake in Iran's future.<sup>44</sup> Noted analyst R.K. Ramazani has observed that the Tehran Declaration "was the outstanding symbol of United States public support for the independence and territorial integrity of Iran" while Mansour Bonakdarian has viewed that the Tehran Conference of the Big Three was a formal Iran-US understanding because of Washington's assumption of responsibility for honoring Iran's independence and ensuring the fulfilment of the pledge made by the other two occupation powers in 1942.<sup>45</sup>

In Iran the Tehran Conference was interpreted as a move by US to check the ambitions of both Britain and Russia in Iran. Meanwhile, on December 6, 1943, the Shah sent a message to President Roosevelt stating that the friendship of the American people was very precious to Iran while his constant desire would be to foster closer ties between Iran and the US which had already been brought so near to one another in the common struggle for freedom. The Shah also visited President Roosevelt at the Russian Embassy in Tehran (see Appendices) to exchange views and to talk to consolidate Iran-US relations. Earlier in the spring of 1943, President Roosevelt sent his personal representative named General Patrick J. Hurley to Iran with the objective of upgrading the US legation as well as to report about the activities of the US troops and political situation in Iran. Hurley prepared a report with some recommendations including the one in which he suggested to raise the status of the legation to Embassy and dispatched it to Washington. Following this, on February 10, 1944, a joint announcement by Iran and the US declared that the two nations had agreed to elevate the status of their diplomatic mission from legations to embassies, which was another sign of growing US interest in Iran. After that the US legation in Tehran was raised to the status of an Embassy on August 27, 1944 and thus the ambassadorial relations between Tehran and Washington were established in 1944. This considerably strengthened Iran-US diplomatic interactions during and after the war.

**e. US Initial Attempts to Ensure Iran's Territorial Integrity**

Since the Allied occupation of Iran in 1941, the US had the fear that the Anglo-Russian presence in Iran might be permanent. Therefore, after the Tehran Conference of 1943, the US government was seen to work for a consolidated strategy for defining Iran's place in a post-war world as an independent nation. In 1944 in a memorandum to President Roosevelt

Secretary of State Cordell Hull (1933-1944) pointed out that “it is to the advantage of the United States to exert itself to see that Iran’s integrity and independence are maintained and that she becomes prosperous and stable.”<sup>46</sup> It is also claimed that by 1944, US aims in Iran encompassed an increased share of Iran’s commerce, development of its natural resources, commercial air rights and a strong and independent Iran, free from internal weaknesses which breed foreign intervention.<sup>47</sup> As time progressed, US policy toward Iran which was taking a sort of defining shape under Roosevelt followed another active course under his successor Harry S. Truman (1945-1952). The Truman administration became increasingly conscious of the growing strategic importance of Iran to the West, and its economic importance with respect to oil and the impending Soviet threats to the Iranian sovereignty. Given this fact, the Truman administration decided to provide strong diplomatic support for Iran as the WWII approaching to an end. This rapid change in US policy from limited to extensive involvement affected the growing Iran-US relations very positively. Realizing the America’s supportive stance toward Iran, Iranians took the first initiative pleading the case for early Allied troops’ withdrawal from Iran even when President Roosevelt was in power. Iran’s foreign minister Mohammad Shayesteh asked US Secretary of State Edward Reilly Stettinius (1944-1945) to place the question of the Allied troops’ withdrawal from Iran on the agenda at the upcoming Yalta Conference of Big-Three, scheduled for February 4-11 in 1945. The US showed some positive gestures to Iran’s appeal although finally it did not raise the issue in the Yalta Conference not to embarrass its wartime ally.

Towards the beginning of the Truman administration Iran again raised the issue of the evacuation of Anglo-Russian forces from its territory following the war ended in Europe on May 8, 1945. On May 18, 1945, in a meeting with Leland Burnette Morris (1944-1945), the first US Ambassador to Iran the Shah discussed the issue. The Shah reminded the Ambassador of terms of the Tripartite Treaty of 1942, which specified and later approved in the Tehran Conference in 1943 that the withdrawal of their troops six months after the end of the war. On May 19, 1945, the Iranian government finally delivered letters to the British, Soviet and US Embassies in Tehran requesting that their troops be withdrawn from Iran. The US agreed to withdraw its troops from Iran and announced that as of June 1, 1945, the army’s supply mission from Iran to the Soviet Union would end very soon. On July 21, 1945, when the Potsdam Conference opened, President Truman made it clear that the rest of US troops (around 5000) would be withdrawn within sixty days. Unlike the US, Britain and Russia failed to provide any time-frame. Truman did not object to delay in British and Soviet troops’ withdrawal from Iran for two reasons. Firstly, Truman wanted to avoid any bargain with its two European Allies on the Iranian issue at this point of war. Secondly, he wanted to transfer US troops from Iran to East Asia, where the US was in full mood of war with Japan. The

question of Allied troop evacuation from Iran thus remained unresolved even when the war finally ended with the Japanese surrender on September 2, 1945. However, by then Iran-US relations witnessed a conspicuous change for US involvement policy in Iranian affairs.

### Conclusion

Since the establishment of bilateral political and diplomatic ties in 1883 relations between Iran and the US remained positive and cordial but extremely limited. The US strictly maintained moral and political standing of non-involvement and did not want to make an enemy in the distant land beyond its sphere of influence. Moreover, before WWI, the US was a regional power and not a world power. Although after WWI the US began to show some degree of diplomatic and economic interest in Iran that did not cement Iran-US bilateral relations. A Middle East scholar by the name of Barry Rubin called this US policy during the formative period of Iran-US relations as one of self-interest and not entirely “paved with good intentions”, Kamyar Ghaneabassiri termed it as US “hypocrisy” because the US failed to live up to the ideals which it set for itself.<sup>48</sup> However, WWII fundamentally changed US policy toward the Middle East in general and Iran in particular which ushered in a new phase of Iran-US relations. Analysts argue that involved with the stated aim of war efforts in Iran oil remained one of the primary reasons why the country became so important to US during this time. Alongside the Iranian oil, Iran’s geo-strategic position—a buffer between the US and the Soviet interests—led the US to involve actively in Iran. In this context, US responded positively and sympathetically to Iran’s call for pressing its independence. For its part, Iran began relying on US as the war was approaching to an end. This in turn, gave the US a scope to advance its own intentions in Iran and in the region as a whole. This ultimately created an avenue for Iran and US to start a new phase of their relationship to throw away the Anglo-Russian influence in Iran forever.

### Notes and References of Chapter 1

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  2. Donald N. Wilber, *Iran: ... , op., cit.*, p. V.
  3. A. C. Millspaugh, *Americans in Persia*, The Brookings Institution, Washington, D. C., 1946, p. 7
  4. Kamyar Ghaneabassiri, ‘U.S. Foreign Policy and Persia, 1856-1921’, *Iranian Studies*, Vol. 35, No. 1-3, Winter-Summer, 2002, p. 149.
  5. For more see: W. Morgan Shuster, *The Strangling of Persia*, The Century CO. New York, 1912.
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- were not concerned with Europe's quarrels. The successive US governments closely followed the Monroe Doctrine that fundamentally shaped the US foreign policy during that time.
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  15. See: Joseph J. St. Marie and Shahdad Naghshpour, *Revolutionary Iran and the United States: Low-intensity Conflict in the Persian Gulf* Ashgagte Publishing Company, USA, 2011, pp. 36-37. Moreover, distance; slow transportation and communication; financial difficulties of Iran and commercial attitudes of the early US diplomats were also contributing factors of not developing Iran-US relations during this early stage.
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  18. Ghaneabassiri, *op., cit.*, pp. 160-165.
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# **Chapter 2**

## **Iran-US Relations: 1945-1953**

### **Introduction**

As stated in the previous chapter, during WWII Iranians saw amazingly US economic and military might which filled their leaders with hopeful expectancy. This led Iran to turn to the US over and over again to resist the Soviet pressure in the post-WWII period. As a result, following the war the US became intensely involved in Iran chiefly for two main objectives: economic and strategic. Economically, the British enjoyed a trade monopoly in Iran for long. After the new situation in the wake of the war, the US was intent on breaking the British monopoly in Iran. Additionally, Iran at that time was the only Middle Eastern country where the US oil companies were not directly involved in operations. In the wake of WWII the US targeted Iran's oil.<sup>1</sup> Strategically, the US oil interest or the economic interest became closely intertwined with the determination of US foreign policy of checking worldwide communism.<sup>2</sup> This was evident when the US took Iran's oil in particular and Middle Eastern oil in general, as one of the vital keys to curb the spread of communism in the region. The birth of Israel on May 14, 1948, added a new dimension to US strategic thinking of the Middle East. Essentially, since the establishment of the state of Israel in 1948 as Washington's vital ally, US foreign policy goals were based on the "holy trinity" of its interests in the Middle East: oil, Israel, and anti-communism and Washington successfully secured them prior to the end of the Cold War in 1991 through the projection of military power, diplomacy, aid, culture, education, espionage and subversion.<sup>3</sup> These three principal goals of US defined the Iran-US relations a lot during the period under discussion in this chapter and beyond.

This chapter critically examines the Iran-US relations from the end of the WWII in 1945 to the CIA-led 1953 coup d'état in Iran. However, special attention will be given to Iran-US relations during the Iranian Crisis of 1945-1946, the Anglo-Iranian oil dispute of 1951-1953 and the CIA-sponsored 1953 coup d'état. For the purpose of better understanding and for our own convenience, the chapter is divided into following three sections.

**Section I: Iran-US Relations: 1945-1951**

**Section II: The Anglo-Iranian Oil Dispute of 1951-1953 and the Iran-US Relations**

**Section III: The 1953 Coup D'état: Watershed in Iran-US Relations**

## **Section I**

### **Iran-US Relations: 1945-1951**

In the present section the study of Iran-US relations is made highlighting the Azerbaijan Crisis or the Iranian Crisis of 1945-1946 and the US role to resolve it and the deepening of Iran-US relations. However, some other issues influencing and impacting the Iran-US relations during the 1945-1951 period are also analysed in this section.

The beginning of the Cold War (1945-1991)<sup>4</sup> with its original location in Iran that the world witnessed in the wake of the global hot war—WWII had tremendous impact on Iran-US relations. Historians of different persuasions agree that Iran became the first battlefield of the Cold War and the Azerbaijan crisis of 1946 or the Iranian Crisis of 1945-1946 was the first real crisis of the Cold War caused by the Soviet threat to Iran's independence and it fell to the US to solve the crisis.<sup>5</sup> In the wake of the end of the WWII northern Iranian provinces namely Azerbaijan and Kurdistan became a hotbed of international diplomacy. Historically, as part of its political and economic designs following the dismal failure to get an oil concession from the Iranian government in 1944, the Soviet Union seized the opportunity of war-time disorders of Iran and approached to stay in the country and “create facts on the ground”.<sup>6</sup> Amidst this turn of the situation, “with the aid of Russian arms, equipment and personnel” the Autonomous Republic of Azerbaijan and the Kurdish People's Republic of Mahabad were proclaimed on December 12 and 15 of 1945 respectively.<sup>7</sup> Cold War historian Kristen Blake has put: “Armed by the Soviets, the Azeris and the Kurds rebelled against the Iranian government and established their own autonomous regimes inside Azerbaijan; this became known as the Iranian Crisis of 1945-1946.”<sup>8</sup> Historically, the Iranian Crisis of 1945-1946 occupies an important place not only in the modern history of Iran but also in the history of Iran-US relations.

As noted in the previous chapter, even though the WWII ended following the Japanese surrender on September 2, 1945, there were no clear signals from the Anglo-Russian powers either to abide by the Tripartite Treaty of Alliance or to evacuate their troops from Iran. However, hopeful of US positive gestures (as demonstrated at Yalta and Potsdam Conference) and doubtful of Soviet activities in Azerbaijan and Kurdistan, Tehran hastened to send its forces to those provinces on November 19, 1945, to restore the central authority there by quelling the Soviet-instigated revolt. Tehran government was entitled to do that under the terms of the 1942 treaty governing the Anglo-Soviet occupation, but the Soviet troops stopped the Iranian forces at Sharifabad four miles east of Qazvin and threatened them of dire consequences if they proceeded. Within few days two separate republics in Azerbaijan and Kurdistan were declared as mentioned above.

Iran saw the development as “separatist” coup in Azerbaijan supported by the Soviet Union and termed it as a national crisis and concluded that its relationship with the Soviet Union was not governing by the 1942 Treaty of Alliance. Under such situation, Iran placed all its hopes to the goodwill of the US government. For the US, the Iranian Crisis of 1945-1946 was too important to be ignored. The US government viewed that the seizure of Iran’s Azerbaijan and Northern Kurdistan was primary Soviet goal, while the long-term Soviet goal was to take control of Turkey, the main bastion against Soviet advance into the entire Middle East. Hence, on November 24, 1945 the US government delivered a note to the Soviet government proposing US, Soviet and British withdrawal from Iran by January 1, 1946. In the note, the US strongly denied that the Soviet Union had the right under Tripartite Treaty to restrict the Iranian forces. It also pointed out to the Soviet government that as long as any foreign troops remained in Iran, incidents and misunderstandings were likely to occur.<sup>9</sup> The Soviet government adopted a ploy and in reply informed the US Embassy in Moscow on November 29, 1945 that the question of withdrawal of Soviet troops from Iran was the subject of consideration at the Council of Foreign Ministers in London. In a more intriguing fashion, the Soviet government made clear that since the issue was a settled matter (as per the Tripartite Treaty of Alliance) Moscow did not see grounds for renewed consideration of the time limit for the withdrawal of their forces from Iran.

Under the circumstances, the US began pressuring the Soviet Union diplomatically along with Britain in different post-war conferences on the one hand, and urged Iran to bring the matter before the newly-founded United Nations Security Council (hereinafter UNSC) promising full US support during the debate in the UNSC, on the other.<sup>10</sup> Reza Shahshahani in an article entitled “The Background of the Iranian Affair” published in 1946, wrote that encouraged by the US Tehran brought the matter of Soviet interference in Iran to the London session of the UNSC in mid-December, 1945. After a series of accusations and counter accusations between the Soviet and British representatives, a resolution was adopted which asked direct negotiations over the Iranian issue between the Iranian and the Soviet governments.<sup>11</sup> It should be noted here that the desire for an Iranian oil concession and the defence of US oil interests in the region were key elements of Washington’s policy of encouraging Iran in the Iranian Crisis. Beyond these considerations, saving Iran from both Soviet and British imperialism became one of US policy priorities at that time. Given, Washington started to formulate future policies and actions to break communist influence in Iran.<sup>12</sup>

Meanwhile, on January 1, 1946 the last US troops left Iran. Britain announced it would meet the March 1, 1946, deadline, but the Soviet Union refused to set a date for the withdrawal of its forces. When it became clear to US that the Soviet Union was going to stay in Iran for an indefinite period, the US had to ally itself with Britain to force out Soviet occupation troops and

to counter Russian attempts to carve up Iran. At this point, with Washington's direct encouragement Iran now filed a formal complaint against the Soviet Union in the UNSC on January 19, 1946, stating that Soviet interference in Iran's internal affairs "might lead to international friction." It is of particular importance that this was the first formal complaint ever to come before the UNSC and thus the Iranian Crisis finally assumed its place in the arena of global politics instead of regional one, with the US taking a leading part in the crisis. In its complaint Iran accused the Soviet Union of interference in Azerbaijan and asked the UNSC to review its case and recommend measures to settle it. Iran then relied on the US for support.<sup>13</sup>

The Soviet Union rejected Iran's accusation and made a request for not inclusion of Iran's appeal in the UNSC's agenda. The Soviet request went unheeded because of US insistence (who was supported by Great Britain, Egypt and Mexico) and the UNSC retained Iranian appeal. When the UNSC finally met in its inaugural session in January 1946, the US denounced the continued Soviet presence in Iran. Since the US government was committed to the support of Iranian independence against Russian encroachments,<sup>14</sup> it lent unprecedented support to Iran and warned Stalin on March 21, 1946, and asked him to withdraw his troops from Iran or the "United States would put some more people in there" including three combat divisions in Austria awaiting their return to the US.<sup>15</sup> Under such unprecedented US insistence and in response to these strongest languages, although not in the form of an ultimatum<sup>16</sup>, on March 24, 1946 the Soviet Union was compelled to declare that all Soviet troops would be withdrawn from Iran within five or six weeks "if no unforeseen circumstances occur."

As the US was seen to stick to its point, the Azerbaijan issue was discussed once again at the UNSC meeting on March 25, 1946, even after the Soviet announcement of March 24, 1946. This in fact, embarrassed the Soviet Union before the world body. In line with this US pressure on the Soviet Union, Iran's Prime Minister Qavam visited Moscow in February 1946 to discuss the situation. On April 4, 1946, Prime Minister Qavam informed US Ambassador to Iran that Tehran and Moscow had reached an agreement.<sup>17</sup> Around this time, Iranian Ambassador in the US Hussein Ala paid frequent visits to Secretary of State Byrnes. Each time after his meeting with Byrnes, Ala, in a press conference made declaration such as "...in case Premier Ghavam [Qavam] yields to Russian demands he will be forced to resign after his return from Moscow" or "Secretary Byrnes has given me assurance that the United States will stand by Iran in case my country's integrity is jeopardized by Russia."<sup>18</sup> This he did, as some argue, clearly to influence Prime Minister Qavam's attitude towards the Soviet Union. Meanwhile, in support of Iran former Secretary of State and US Ambassador to the UN Edward Stettinius stated that although Iran and the Soviet Union reached an agreement, but the UNSC had no concrete proof that all Soviet troops had withdrawn from northern Iran. He then clearly announced that the UNSC would

remove the case from its agenda on May 6, 1946, if it knew for sure that the Soviet troops were gone.<sup>19</sup> At the turn of this development, an embarrassed Soviet Union now gave in and completed the evacuation from Iran by May 9, 1946.<sup>20</sup> Thus the Azerbaijan or the Iranian Crisis of 1945-1946 came to a peaceful end for which Iran must owe to the US.

Reports are available that the Soviet Union withdrew from Iran in May 1946 in the face of reported US threats to use nuclear force when the tension between the two superpowers reached near to a crisis point.<sup>21</sup> Most analysts agree that during the Iranian Crisis of 1945-1946 the US took unprecedented and uncompromising attitude toward the Soviet and “the limits of American tolerance were made clear to Stalin.”<sup>22</sup> Thus the “get tough” policy of Truman instead of policy of appeasement towards the Soviet Union in language and in diplomatic actions in the UNSC and the US unilateral position in the UNSC for the solution of the Iranian Crisis which was unprecedented in the history of the UNSC helped resolve the Iranian Crisis of 1945-1946.<sup>23</sup> In the words of Kristen Blake who has conducted an extensive study on US-Soviet power-struggle in Iran over a period of 1945-1962: “There is no doubt that U.S. support for Iran was one of the key reasons why the Soviets decided to withdraw their troops from northern Iran.”<sup>24</sup> Therefore, it may safely be concluded that it was the US indispensable support for Iran as opposed to the Soviet designs in northern Iran spearheaded the termination of the crisis that left a lasting legacy on Iran-US relations.

With its sovereignty intact, foreign troops gone from its soil, Iran got rid of two hundred years of foreign domination, and secured its independence and sovereignty. Historian Louise L’estrangere Fawcett has expressly stated that Iran’s independence owed much to the US support in the Iranian crisis of 1945-1946 and without the US intervention, the division of Iran into Soviet (north) and British (south) sphere of influence might have become permanent.<sup>25</sup> Iran gratefully recognized this and came out of the crisis entirely pro-American. Thus in the immediate aftermath of the Iranian Crisis when ‘the United States was the most admired nation in Iran’, Tehran’s international relations entered a new era: that of close and growing alignment with Washington.<sup>26</sup> My study helps to conclude that following the end of the 1945-1946 Iranian Crisis there began a mutually close relationship between Iran and the US on the basis of the maxim: *a friend in need, a friend indeed*, at least from Iranian perspective. The interests of Iran and the US now coincided: Iran wished to maintain its independence and sovereignty, and the US sought to deny the Soviet access to Iranian oil and the warm-water ports of the Persian Gulf, within the context of the Cold War.<sup>27</sup>

Given, after the end of the Iranian Crisis of 1945-1946, Iran’s Prime Minister Qavam moved to cultivate close cooperation with US for economic and diplomatic purposes. Emboldened by

recent US support and as a primary gesture to forge close cooperation with the US, Qavam removed Tudeh ministers from his Cabinet. Qavam's anti-communist measure was matched by positive gestures from the US. The US State Department on October 18, 1946, issued a report regarding US policy toward Iran which stated that "the key objective of U.S. policy was to maintain Iran's sovereignty free from Soviet control...to prevent Iran from falling to Communism, it was necessary for the United States to provide diplomatic support as well as financial and military aid."<sup>28</sup> Additionally, the State Department committed to provide an Export-Import Bank loan, an enlarged US military advisory mission to Iran and increased cultural exchanges between Iran and the US. The State Department thus agreed to give broad-based assurances to Qavam of US support.<sup>29</sup>

The US government also pledged to support Iran's independence not only by words, but also by appropriate military acts. On October 28, 1946, the US government agreed to sell a limited amount of weaponry, not exceeding \$10 million to Iran. Although this was insufficient to the Iranian expectation, however, this had a significant impact on the existing Iran-US relations. In the following months the US also proposed the sale of non-aggression military material to assist Iran in maintaining internal order. Finally, the US proposed the maintenance and prolongation of the US military mission to Iran, the intensification of an informational and cultural programme between Tehran and Washington and assistance in obtaining an Export-Import Bank loan for Iran. These US practical measures helped considerably to strengthen the Iranian government in the post-Iranian Crisis of 1945-1946. Emboldened by the US limited positive gestures, Prime Minister Qavam now announced that his government was going to send security forces to Azerbaijan to bring the province back under Tehran's control. The Soviet Ambassador in Tehran advised Qavam to abandon his plan of sending Iranian troops to Azerbaijan. Qavam looked to the US for assistance. The US assistance was readily available. Ambassador Allen advised Qavam to carry on his plan. He also suggested that the Iranian government could also notify the UNSC if the Soviets were to interfere. With US support in the background, Iranian forces entered Tabriz on December 11, 1946, and took control of Azerbaijan and Kurdistan by mid December. Thus with US help and encouragement things in Iran began to change dramatically and the result was the deepening of Iran-US bilateral relations.

Thus the first Cold War reality between two superpowers namely the US and the Soviet Union ended with the termination of the Iranian Crisis of 1945-1946 which catapulted Iran-US relationship to a new phase of its history. As noted above, the Shah whole-heartedly acknowledged that the Iranian Crisis of 1945-1946 had ended due to the efficient conduct of the Iranian forces and US support for the maintenance of Iran's sovereignty. Therefore, after the end of the Iranian Crisis, Iran turned to the US with much hope to consolidate Tehran-Washington



relations. However, since the Soviet withdrawal from northern Iran, US policymakers generally considered Iran to be “vital to the security of the United States” but not critical enough to warrant the highest levels of US support.<sup>30</sup> For that reason, when the Truman Doctrine<sup>31</sup> was declared on March 12, 1947, Iran was not included in Truman’s initial military and financial assistance group. As a consequence, Iran greeted the Truman Doctrine with mixed results. Noticing the unhappiness of the Iranian leaders, Washington soon recognized the importance of Iran and placed the country on par with Greece and Turkey by creating a new unit entitled “Division of Greek, Turkish and Iranian Affairs.”

Meanwhile, in the midst of growing Iran-US relations, when in a dramatic move, on June 19, 1947, Qavam reshuffled his cabinet by appointing new faces friendly to the West, it was greeted with positive gesture from the US. Following day, on June 20, 1947 an agreement was signed between Tehran and Washington whereby the US government granted Iran a credit of \$25 million (repayable in 15 years) in line with the Truman Doctrine for the purchase of surplus military equipment.<sup>32</sup> Washington also concluded to extend the existing US Army, Air Force, and Gendarmerie missions in Iran. While the size of the US embassy swelled, including the addition of an intelligence station in Tehran.<sup>33</sup> In the meantime, in anticipation of Soviet pressure on Iran, the US government started campaigning against possible ratification of the Soviet oil concession and then lent strong support to Iran even before the Majlis met. Ambassador Allen made a decisive gesture when on September 11, 1947, in a gathering at the Iranian-American Cultural Relations Society, he said that US respected Iran’s sovereignty and would also support fully its freedom to make its own choice. He concluded: “Iran’s resources belong to Iran. Iran can give them away free of charge or refuse to dispose of them at any price if it so desires.”<sup>34</sup> According to the keen observation of Wilfrid Knapp, for all the restraint of its language, this was a historic speech which signaled a major US commitment to the independence of Iran.<sup>35</sup>

Following Allen’s speech, on October 6, 1947 a military accord was signed between Tehran and Washington and after that the US Army Mission, or ARMISH became the official military mission to the Iranian Army with General Robert W. Grow was the new chief of ARMISH. To some, the Iran-US military agreement of 1947 was the first indication of the growth of Iran-US relations.<sup>36</sup> Because, in the light of this agreement a US military mission was set up to assist the Minister of War in improving the efficiency of the Iranian army. It included a clause which prevented other countries from advising the Iranian army without US consent—a clause for which Great Britain had to bribe the then Iranian authority but failed to get ratified by the Majlis some 28 year ago in 1919. Additionally, the life span of Iran-US military agreement was extended until March 20, 1949 with further scope of extension. Since the Soviet threat was still very much powerful by reason of being a powerful neighbor, US decision to continue the

military mission to Iran appeared decisive in helping Iran to deal with the external as well as other internal threats. Without a shadow of doubt, this new arrangement actually gave US a special position in Iran-US relations which marked the zenith of the deepening of Iran-US diplomatic relations.

Taking the growing Iran-US relations into consideration and encouraged by the implied US promise of support the Majlis rejected the proposed Iran-Soviet oil agreement by 102 votes to 2 on October 22, 1947.<sup>37</sup> A furious Soviet Union alleged that the rejection was inspired by US intervention. Amidst mounting Soviet criticism in February 1948, the Iranian Majlis ratified an agreement between Iran and the US providing for the purchase of military equipment by the former from the latter up to a value of \$10 million and a value of \$16 million for repair and shipping costs. On May 13, 1948, Washington announced that Tehran would receive a credit of \$10 million to purchase US surplus military equipment and another credit of \$16 to cover the handling costs of material purchased. It is perceived that one of the key motives of this announcement was to buy Iran's support for the Jewish state of Israel which was to be created with critical US support only a day later.<sup>38</sup> The creation of the state of Israel on May 14, 1948, made the US more dependent on Iran for the latter's crucial support for Israel given anti-Israeli sentiment in the Arab countries and given the outbreak of the Arab-Israeli war immediately after the declaration of the militant state in Palestine. This US dependence on Iran for Israel further deepened Iran-US relations. Since Iran is a non-Arab Muslim country surrounded by adversarial Arab Muslim states and since Iran did not support the first Arab-Israeli war of 1948, Washington turned to Tehran for the needed support for Israel that resulted in the close Iran-Israel and Iran-US relations in the following years.<sup>39</sup>

Another area of concern during the growing Iran-US close relationship since 1946 was anti-Iranian Soviet propaganda. Following the withdrawal of its forces from Iran, the Soviet Union directed its propaganda machine against Iran. In its barrage of anti-Iran propaganda, the Soviet Union accused Iran of being fallen to US stooge. Iran noticed the Soviet activities with utmost concern. The US got equally alarmed. On January 13, 1949, a State Department report on US policy toward Iran emphasized to prevent Soviet domination of Iran. The report also noted that the Shah was the only reliable individual in Iran to promote US interests.<sup>40</sup> Later in a public statement on March 23, 1949, US Secretary of State Dean Gooderham Acheson (1949-1953) declared that Soviet charges that Iran was being transformed into a US military base were "altogether false and demonstrably untrue." He finally added that US interest in the security of the Middle East, "particularly in Greece, Turkey and Iran" had in no way been reduced by the negotiation of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO).<sup>41</sup> Rather with the signature of the NATO on April 4, 1949, Iran received some renewed consideration in Washington.<sup>42</sup> In a stark

contrast, in the wake of an attempt on the Shah's life when the Shah sought US support in the creation of a strong Senate for more political power, the US showed cold response. Against this backdrop, to embolden the Shah, the US government invited him for a state visit to US. The Shah made his first historic lengthy official visit to the US in November-December 1949, with the purpose of seeking more economic and military aid.<sup>43</sup> But to the Shah's dismay, Truman tactfully avoided giving any definite military and economic commitment to Iran. When the Shah got disappointed at the US, on October 6, 1949, Washington decided to provide \$27.64 million for military aid to Iran, the Philippines and Korea under the Mutual Defense Assistance Act.<sup>44</sup> US aid also came when the Shah initiated some reforms including the appointment of a pro-American General Ali Razmara (June 26, 1950-March 7, 1951) as the new Prime Minister.

### Conclusion

In a bi-polar international system since 1945 when Soviet Communism became an aggressive challenger to US interests all over the world, particularly in the Middle East region, the US felt compelled to take a more active role in Iran and in the region as a whole to protect its vital interests. There is no dispute that during this time one of US policies toward Iran was to prevent Iran from slipping into Soviet hands by strengthening Tehran-Washington relations. While after being freed from Russian intervention in its territory just because of US important assistance Iran hastily moved to develop close relations with the US. Thus the period since 1945 witnessed a gradual emergence of Iran-US relations on the basis of genuinely mutual trust and integrity. Oddly enough, this type of Iran-US relations began to turn into sour from 1951 over the nationalization of Iran's oil industry to which we now turn to.

### Notes and References of Section I of Chapter 2

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1. In fact, after the war when the coal-powered industry of war-wrecked Europe became dependent on oil, the US became concerned about its allies of Western European countries. Moreover, the Truman Doctrine of March 1947, the Marshall-Bevin Plan of June of that year, and the NATO alliance of April 1949 all depended for their success on the continuous delivery of Middle Eastern oil to Europe.
  2. John P. Miglietta, *op. cit.*, p. 36; Richard T. Sale, 'America in Iran', *op. cit.*, pp. 28-34.
  3. Michael C. Hudson, 'To Play the Hegemon: Fifty Years of US Policy toward the Middle East,' *The Middle East Journal*, Vol. 50, No. 3, Summer 1996, p. 329; Harvey P. Hall, *op. cit.*, pp.5-15.
  4. The Cold War is a contest and world-wide struggle for supremacy between two opposing and incompatible ways of life and systems of thought: capitalism and communism, one led by the White House (the US), the other by Moscow (the Soviet Union). Two systems found themselves colliding all over the globe since 1945 which ended in 1991 with the collapse of the Soviet Union.
  5. Richard Crockatt, *The Fifty Years War: The United States and the Soviet Union in World Politics, 1941-1991*, Routledge, New York, 1995, p. 176. Kenneth M. Polack, *The Persian Puzzle: ...*, *op. cit.*, p. 45.
  6. Other Soviet intentions in Iran were: a reversion to the Imperialist and expansionist Tsarist policy, the establishment of a "friendly" government in Tehran, the constitution of a security belt for the Caucasian oilfields, the complete eradication of Anglo-US influence in Iran, closer proximity to

- British strategic positions in the Middle East in case of possible contingencies, and using Iran as a lever to obtain other concessions, and gaining a direct access to the Persian Gulf.
7. His Imperial Majesty Mohammad Reza Shah Pahlavi Shahanshah of Iran, *Mission for My Country*, Hutchinson & CO. LTD, London, 1961, pp. 114-115. For a vivid description of the crisis see: Louise L'estrangre Fawcett's *Iran and the Cold War: ...*, *op. cit.*; A. H. Hamzavi's *Persia and Powers: ...*, *op. cit.*, and Lenczowski's, *Russia and the West in Iran, 1918-1948: ...*, *op. cit.*
  8. Kristen Blake, *The U.S.-Soviet Confrontation in Iran 1945-1962: ...*, *op. cit.*, p. 22. See also: Eduard M. Mark, 'Allied Relations in Iran, 1941-1947: The Origins of a Cold War Crisis', *The Wisconsin Magazine of History*, Vol. 59, No. 1, Autumn, 1975, pp. 51-63.
  9. Gary R. Hess, 'The Iranian Crisis of 1945-46 and the Cold War', *Political Science Quarterly*, Vol. 89, No. 1, March 1974, p. 127; Kenneth M. Pollack, *The Persian Puzzle: ...*, *op. cit.*, pp. 45.
  10. Harvey P. Hall, *op. cit.*, pp. 21-22; Robert Rossow, Jr., 'The Battle of Azerbaijan, 1946,' *Middle East Journal*, Winter, 1956, p. 21.
  11. Reza Shahshahani, 'The Background of the Iranian Affair,' *Science & Society*, Vol. 10, No. 2, Spring, 1946, p. 130.
  12. Fawcett, *op. cit.*, pp. 119-129; Richard T. Sale, *op. cit.*, pp. 31-32; Harvey P. Hall, *op. cit.*, p. 18.
  13. Rouhollah K. Ramazani, *Iran's Foreign Policy, 1941-1973: ...*, *op. cit.*, p. 117. For detail of the complain see: A. H. Hamzavi, *op. cit.*, pp. 47, 82.
  14. John Marlowe, *op. cit.*, p. 82.
  15. N. Saifpour Fatemi, 'The United States in the Changing Middle East', *Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science*, Vol. 294, America and a New Asia, July 1954, p. 154.
  16. Some claim that Truman had sent an ultimatum to Stalin. For more, see: Michael K. Sheehan, *Iran: The Impact of United States Interests and Policies 1941-1954*, Brooklyn, Theo. Gaus' Sons, Inc., USA, 1968, 32; George Lenczowski, 'United States' Support for Iran's Independence and Integrity, 1945-1959', *Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science*, Vol. 401, May 1972.
  17. Under the agreement Tehran agreed to recommend to the Majlis the establishment of a joint Iran-Russian oil company to exploit the oil resources of northern Iran in return for Moscow's promise for pull out. The 25-year proposed oil agreement promised 51% of the stock to the Soviet Union. Iran's Prime Minister Qavam also agreed to grant three cabinet posts to pro-Communist Tudeh party members and to withdraw Iran's complaint against Moscow before the UN. Thus, the agreement permitted the Soviet Union to leave Iran without losing face.
  18. Reza Shahshahani, 'The Background of the Iranian Affair,' *op. cit.*, p. 130.
  19. Kristen Blake, *op. cit.*, p. 37
  20. George Lenczowski, 'Support for Iran's Independence and Integrity, 1945-1959', *op. cit.*, p. 49; George Lenczowski, *The Middle East in World Affairs*, *op. cit.*, p. 183; Kristen Blake, *op. cit.*, pp. 37-38; Harvey P. Hall, *op. cit.*, p. 20; *Mission for My Country*, *op. cit.*, p. 116.
  21. Kenneth M. Pollack, *The Persian Puzzle: ...*, *op. cit.*, p. 46; Francis Robinson (ed.), *The New Cambridge History of Islam*, Vol. 5, p. 485; *Time*, January 1980. See also: Ralph A. Cossa, *Iran: Soviet Interests, US Concerns*, McNair Papers, Number Eleven, The Institute for National Strategic Studies, Washington, D.C., 1990, pp. 25-26.
  22. Kuross A. Samii, 'Truman against Stalin in Iran: A Tale of Three Messages', *Middle Eastern Studies*, Vol. 23, No. 1, January, 1987, p. 106; Fawcett, *op. cit.*, p. 131; John P. Miglietta *op. cit.*, p. 38.
  23. Thomas G. Paterson et. el., *American Foreign Relations: A History Since 1895*, Vol. 2, Wadsworth Cengage Learning, Boston, USA, 2009, p. 240; Leon T. Hadar, *Quagmire: America in the Middle East*, Cato Institute, Washington D.C., 1992, p. 44.
  24. Kristen Blake, *op. cit.*, p. 38
  25. Fawcett, *op. cit.*, pp. 53, 175.
  26. Kuross A. Samii, *Involvement by Invitation: American Strategies of Containment in Iran*, The Pennsylvania State University Press, USA, 1987, p. 151. See also: Kristen Blake, *op. cit.*, p. 43; Fawcett, *op. cit.*, p. 180.

27. Roham Alvandi, 'Iranian-American Relations after September 11: Clash of Civilizations or Clash of Interests?', *Australian Quarterly*, Vol. 74, No. 2, March-April, 2002, p. 9.
28. Kristen Blake, *op., cit.*, p. 41.
29. Barry Rubin, *Paved with Good Intentions: ...*, *op., cit.*, p. 35.
30. For more see: James F. Goode, *The United States and Iran, 1946-1951: The Diplomacy of Neglect*, Palgrave Macmillan, New York, 1989. See also: Alan P. Dobson, and Steve Marsh, *US Foreign Policy since 1945*, Routledge, New York, 2006, p. 24; Harvey P. Hall, 'American Interests in the Middle East', *Headline Series*, No. 72, November-December 1948, New York, USA, p. 23.
31. Since 1945 the US policy was built upon assumption that the Soviet Union was by nature an expansionist power, and thus Washington should meet every attempt to expand Soviet influence with appropriate "counterforce". Proposed by diplomat George F. Kennan this policy of firm containment of the Soviet Union later adopted as policy in Truman Doctrine. The principle objective of the Truman Doctrine was to block or contain Soviet incursion, whether territorial or political.
32. Kristen Blake, *op., cit.*, p. 45; Rouhollah K. Ramazani, *Iran's Foreign Policy, 1941-1973: ...*, *op., cit.*, p. 158.
33. The US intelligence began carrying out a series of covert actions code-named TPBEDAMN, or BEDAMN aimed at undermining the Soviet position in Iran thus securing Iranian government from internal communist elements and preventing the Soviet expansion in the region. For this purpose the US government spent \$1 million per year. Run by the newly created Central Intelligence Agency—the CIA that came into effect upon signing a piece of legislation by President Truman on July 26, 1947, these operations enormously strengthened US position in Iran. It is pertinent to state that the Central Intelligence Agency-CIA was organized in 1947 out of the wartime Office of Strategic Service (OSS), based on the recommendations drafted by a group of experts led by Allen Dulles.
34. John Marlowe, *Iran: ...*, *op., cit.*, p. 83; Kristen Blake, *op., cit.*, p. 45; Fawcett, *op., cit.*, pp. 139-140.
35. Wilfrid Knapp, "The United States and the Middle East: How Many Special Relationships?" in *The Middle East and the United States: Perceptions and Policies*, (ed.) by Haim Shaked and Itamar Rabinovich, Transaction Books, USA, 1980, p. 14.
36. Mehrunnisa Ali, 'Iran's Relations with the US and USSR', *Pakistan Horizon*, Vol. 26, No. 3, Third Quarter, 1973, p. 47; Thomas M. Ricks, 'U.S. Military Missions to Iran, 1943-1978: The Political Economy of Military Assistance', *Iranian Studies*, Vol. 12, No. 3-4, Summer-Autumn, 1979, p. 173; Rouhollah K. Ramazani, *Iran's Foreign Policy, 1941-1973: ...*, *op., cit.*, pp. 160-161.
37. John Marlowe, *op., cit.*, p. 83; Haim Shaked and Itamar Rabinovich (ed.), *The Middle East and the United States: Perceptions and Policies*, Transaction Books, USA, 1980, p. 168.
38. Given anti-Israeli Arab sentiment, the US found a non-Arab supporter of Israel in Iran. Besides, the US had the knowledge that following the declaration of militant state of Israel, Arab states would go to war with the new nation. Under the circumstance, US announced the aid for Iran that actually prevented Iran from joining the Arabs in the war with Israel.
39. For more see: Trita Parsi, *Treacherous Alliance: the secret dealings of Israel, Iran, and the United States*, Yale University Press, New Haven, USA, 2007, pp. 19-20.
40. This was demonstrated following a failed assassination attempt on the Shah's life on February 4, 1949, President Truman sent a telegram on the same day to him conveying his best wishes for a speedy recovery.
41. The North Atlantic Treaty Organization is an intergovernmental military alliance based on the North Atlantic Treaty which was signed on 4 April 1949. Washington-inspired the organization constitutes a system of collective defence whereby its member states agree to mutual defense in response to an attack by any external party. The headquarters of 28-member states NATO is in Brussels, Belgium.
42. James F. Goode, *The United States and Iran, 1946-1951: The Diplomacy of Neglect*, Palgrave Macmillan, New York, 1989, p. 35.
43. For the details of the Shah's visit to US see: James A. Bill, *The Eagle and the Lion*, *op., cit.*, p. 40.
44. Lenczowski, *The Middle East in World Affairs*, *op., cit.*, pp. 186-187.

## **Section II**

### **The Anglo-Iranian Oil Dispute of 1951-1953 and the Iran-US Relations**

Another major event involving US in Iranian affairs that hugely influenced the courses of Iran-US relations since 1951 was the Anglo-Iranian oil dispute of 1951-1953, which resulted from the nationalization of oil Iran's industry in 1951 and the British opposition to it. The present section will look at the history of Iran-US relations of the 1951-1953 period specifically from March 1951 to January 1953 in the context of the nationalization of Iran's oil industry then owned by Great Britain and the dispute that followed between Iran and Britain which in turn initiated a complicated and protracted mediation with US involvement.

Historically, the Iranian government granted a sixty-year oil concession to a British citizen by the name of William Knox D'Arcy (1849-1917) on May 28, 1901.<sup>1</sup> Following the oil discovery at Masjid-i Sulaiman in the southwestern province of Khuzestan on May 26, 1908, the Anglo-Persian Oil Company (hereinafter APOC) was formed in April 1909. The British government took over the APOC by acquiring its 51% ownership in May 1914 spending £2 million. Since the discovery of oil, APOC earned its profits by exploring, pumping, refining, transporting and marketing Iranian oil. Sure enough, at almost from that time Iran's grievances against the APOC for its control over its oil and the inadequate amount of revenue allotted to it became a fact. Reza Shah was able to adjust some of Iran's grievances by negotiating a new oil concession after cancelling the old concession and signing a new one for another 60 years and signed on April 29, 1933. Since then the APOC was to be known as Anglo-Iranian Oil Company (hereinafter AIOC). During WWII Reza Shah's successor Muhammad Reza Shah made an all-out effort to involve US in its economy by offering oil concession in 1944, however, it ended in dismal failure because the Soviet demanded a similar oil concession from Iran. This in turn resulted in the oil crisis of 1944. As the 1944 oil crisis continued to dominate the Iranian politics during the WWII, Iranian nationalists led by Dr. Mohammad Mosaddeq (who was then a Majlis deputy) put an end to the oil crisis by forcing the Majlis to formulate a bill not conferring any oil concessions to any foreign country during war years. Heartened by this success, in a changed world situation following the war, Iranian nationalists targeted the AIOC and pressed the British-owned AIOC to increase Iran's share of profits. Under pressure from the nationalists, the Majlis now passed a law in 1947 that expressed dissatisfaction about the 1933 concession and its unremitting violation by AIOC.

Realistically, the revision of the AIOC concession of 1933 had become imperative for several reasons.<sup>2</sup> However, Iran's problem with the AIOC began with the launching of the First Seven Year Development Plan in 1949. The Seven-Year Development Plan envisaged the expenditure of \$650 million of which about \$210 million were to come from oil revenue in seven years. About the remaining money Iran expected US economic assistance given Tehran's growing bilateral relations

with Washington following the end of the Iranian Crisis of 1945-1946. Quite contrarily to the Iranian expectation, the US did not come to support Iran's Seven-Year Development Plan once it was launched. Instead, Washington made it clear that Iran could not expect large sums of US aid to finance its development projects and advised Tehran government to make use of its oil revenues to finance those projects.<sup>3</sup> Shah's failed mission to the US in 1949 for economic and military assistance from the US was a case in point.

Meanwhile, having been failed to convince the British government to grant a 50-50 profit sharing which was widely practiced in Venezuela and Saudi Arabia on March 15, 1951, the Iranian Majlis passed a bill to nationalize the oil industry. Kristen Blake has pointedly remarked that due to the lack of US financial aid, Iran turned to its oil revenues to finance its Seven-Year Development Plan. This resulted in Iran's historic decision of the nationalization of the oil industry in March 1951 and this in turn precipitated the oil dispute of 1951-1953. The Majlis then elected Mosaddeq—the recognized leader of Iranian nationalism of the mid-twentieth century—Iran's new Prime Minister by a vote of 79-12 on April 28, 1951. Mosaddeq, who was now a hero of epic proportions, as Prime Minister of Iran, declared AIOC nationalized on May 1, 1951. He promised compensation to the AIOC in return. He set up a new Iranian company by the name of National Iranian Oil Company (hereinafter NIOC) to take control of oil production from the AIOC. His government then invited British employees to work for the new authority.

At the same time, Iran expected the US to be a neutral party that would make loans to and purchase Iran's oil. But the relationship between the two countries took an uneven path—a path of disguised hostility, which I prefer to call 'a low-intensity hostility'—following the nationalization of Iran's oil industry. Factually, the complex phase of Iran-US relations began immediately after the nationalization of Iran's oil industry and the US intriguing policy towards this Iranian action. The subsequent oil dispute between Iran and Great Britain became evident when Iranian nationalist Prime Minister Mosaddeq moved to implement the nationalization act. With time, the low-intensity US hostility towards Mosaddeq's nationalist government became clear although there are evidences that initially the US encouraged the nationalists to nationalize Iran's oil industry. Arguably, there were reasons for Iranian nationalists and their Prime Minister Dr. Mohammad Mosaddeq to hope that the US government would support Tehran's actions concerning the nationalization of oil industry, particularly given the growing Iran-US bilateral relations since 1945. In essence, Iran-US relations were outstandingly tested (for example, through the Iranian Crisis of 1945-1946) well before the nationalization of Iran's oil industry in March 1951. Kuross A. Samii has observed that the benevolent image of the US that persisted in Iran since the end of the Iranian Crisis of 1945-1946, later promoted the Iranian nationalists to seek US assistance in their crusade against the British AIOC.<sup>4</sup> Additionally, US Ambassador to Iran Henry F. Grady (1950-1951) openly and frequently expressed his hatred for British imperialism and then misled the Iranian nationalists to

believe that the US would help them resist British pressure.<sup>5</sup> Thus, when as part of its stated policy the US government did tacitly and outwardly support Iran's move for the nationalization of oil industry,<sup>6</sup> while the real motive of the US remained a hidden agenda.

It is argued that the US government initially supported Mosaddeq and his nationalization of oil industry for political (to counter the Soviet Union), and for economic reasons (to keep the normal flow of Iran's oil to the international market). Barry Rubin has noted that many Truman administration policymakers, including Secretary of State Dean Acheson and his Middle East advisors, and US Ambassador to Iran Grady, thought that the region's nationalists would provide a strong bulwark against communism. Washington at the outset promoted momentarily Iranian nationalism to counter Soviet communism (a similar policy that had been adopted by Britain in 1921 when it promoted Iranian nationalism then led by Reza Khan to counter Russian Bolshevism to secure London's interest in Iran). Washington did this as a part of its policy to find and encourage forces that enjoyed popular support, as long as they were also anti-communist.<sup>7</sup> Moreover, the Truman administration strongly held the view that Mosaddeq was a better guarantee against communism than anyone else.<sup>8</sup> Plus, unlike Egypt's Nasser, Mosaddeq did not take a confrontational policy toward Israel. The government of Prime Minister Mosaddeq in 1951 recognized Israel as a fact in the region but still refused *de jure* recognition. Evidences are also available that by reason of being a proponent of democracy and self-determination in the Third World the US appeared supportive towards Iran's nationalization move at the initial stage and the Truman administration did not risk its image by opposing it.

Initially once the negotiations over the Anglo-Iranian oil dispute began the US got involved and adopted a role of an impartial mediator. As time progressed, the US intriguing policy became evident.<sup>9</sup> Historically, the US involvement in the Anglo-Iranian oil dispute was dramatic. Following the nationalization of Iran's oil industry, Britain flatly rejected the nationalization move viewing the action as a unilateral cancellation of contractual rights of 1901 and 1933. Britain then resorted to economic pressure and military threats. Economically, Britain—the main benefactor of Iranian oil concession—imposed an economic (oil) embargo on Iran and under the pressure from oil companies the US government lent support to it. Militarily, the threat to use force was not possible due to US non-cooperation. So, Britain had to content simply by filing petition with the International Court of Justice (herein after ICJ) in the Hague on May 26, 1951 to adjudicate on the legality of the act of nationalization. Iran rejected the Court's jurisdiction on May 28. On September 28, 1951, Britain also lodged a complaint against Iran with the UNSC. Finally, realizing that the US involvement was quintessential to stave off Iranian decision of oil nationalization or for a negotiated settlement of the dispute, Britain sought the US involvement in the oil dispute. Given, US involvement in the Anglo-Iranian oil dispute became a fact. The US involvement in the oil dispute was also due to the Iran's geostrategic importance and Iran's rich oil reserves.<sup>10</sup> However,



Washington's involvement in the Anglo-Iranian crisis of 1951-1953 and the time-killing negotiations for a so-called peaceful solution should be seen in the context that the waning British power was rapidly being taken over by the US itself. In turn, Washington's involvement in the dispute and subsequent Iran-US relations should be seen in the light of the East-West Cold War, Anglo-American special relations, and decolonization and the rise of the Third World nationalism and the US responses to it, and above all the increasing US interests in the Middle East in general, and in Iran in particular.

Mark J. Gasiorowski, a prominent scholar has argued that after the nationalization law was enacted, the Truman administration pursued two principal goals regarding Iran: retaining Iran in the Western camp at all costs and ensuring stability in the world oil market despite Iran's nationalization move. These goals the US wanted to achieve without undermining Mosaddeq's nationalist government and challenging Iran's sovereignty. This meant that the US policy toward Iran during the latter's dispute with Britain over oil was to support the Mosaddeq government and seek an end to the oil dispute through diplomatic means.<sup>11</sup> But reality was a different matter. Because, once the negotiations began, the US only worked to preserve the interests of Washington and London by exploiting the negotiation process. Fakhreddin Azimi has clearly stated: "Despite their mediation efforts to settle the oil dispute, the Americans were no more prepared than the British to allow Iran to make its oil nationalization a sustainable success, as this development would have jeopardized their own oil interests elsewhere."<sup>12</sup> As the study approaches, the US position will be clear on the dispute which in turn will affect Iran-US relations hugely.

In the meantime, during his visit to the US in mid-October, 1951, Mosaddeq made a strong case before the UNSC for Iran and its nationalization move. Later during his lunch with the President Truman and Secretary Acheson at Blair House on October 23, 1951, Truman even assured Mosaddeq that the US had no national or private interests in Iran's oil and it only wanted to help the two sides solve the dispute through a fair and negotiated settlement warning that Russia was sitting like a vulture on a fence waiting to pounce on the oil. Ironically, at the end of the day, it was the American eagle that pounced Iranian oil in 1953 which will be elaborated in the next section. In fact, in the negotiations over Anglo-Iranian oil dispute, the US government adopted overtly the stated policy of supporting Mosaddeq and his nationalization of Iran's oil industry on the one hand, covertly it took a policy of not allowing Iran to proceed with the nationalization of its oil industry which might jeopardize US oil interests in the Middle East and elsewhere in the world as Azimi argued. The hidden agenda of the US in this regard, however, was the retention of Iran and its oil resources with the West at any cost, even if by adopting unfair means. And all US efforts were directed during the protracted negotiations of the dispute to that end.<sup>13</sup> This will be made clear in the following paragraphs.

Needless to say, for years the US had been ardently cherishing to have an access to Iranian oil. US attempts to enter into Iranian oil early in the 1920s, then in 1937 and 1944 were met with strong opposition from Britain and Russia. Now, after a changed international situation and given the rise of Iranian nationalism at its apex under the charismatic leadership of Mosaddeq the US opted for supporting Mosaddeq government and then waited for implementing its real objectives. The waning position of Britain since the WWII encouraged US enough to exploit the oil crisis and bring the situation in favour of its own side. When it succeeded in doing this, the US moved ahead in the race for Iran which was Washington's real motive. For that the US paid little interest for negotiated settlement. In fact, the US was not in a position to reach any sort of settlement over the oil issue from the very start as Washington itself tried secretly to get involved in Iran's oil industry.<sup>14</sup> That is why there were US-mediated slow-going protracted negotiations which caused much dissatisfaction of Mosaddeq. Therefore, US-mediated negotiations were widely seen as waiting game on the part of the US.

Economically, Washington covertly preferred to entangle the dispute through the so-called time-killing negotiations and in the name of bringing both parties to a negotiating table for the 50-50 profit-sharing offer knowing full well that Iranians would not accept the offer. Therefore, fundamentally, an acceptable solution to the oil dispute was a distant destination. The hard-line, inflexible position of the British, their determination to maintain the control over Iran's oil industry on the one hand, and Mosaddeq's revolutionary stand on nationalization prevented them from reaching an accepted settlement. This reality largely helped the US to play intriguing role in the so-called negotiations. Additionally, the US oil companies' supportive policy to the AIOC, particularly in the British-enforced oil embargo on Iran and their influence on US government helped the government to change its initial policy toward Iran and finally led the oil negotiation to a standstill.<sup>15</sup> It is said that from the very start US oil companies recommended backing the British instead of giving Iran better terms. The oil companies convinced the policy-makers in Washington that Iran's nationalization would end the "sanctity of contracts" and threaten US oil and other investment agreements throughout the world. Influenced by the US major oil companies policy-makers in Washington concluded that it was not possible for US to ensure stability in the world oil market without putting an end to Iran's nationalization move. By the same token, the US aimed to achieve its goal without damaging Anglo-US special relations. Under the circumstance, the US reversed field overnight to support the British in a variety of ways: negotiating for 50-50 split, joining in the British-initiated oil embargo etc.<sup>16</sup>

Admittedly, the US had at that moment, as it does have today real and vital interests in the Middle East. When the Anglo-Iranian oil crisis began in 1951 the Cold War thinking was fundamental in US policy toward the oil dispute. Mindful of fresh memories of the Iranian Crisis of 1945-46, and bitter war against Soviet-backed forces in Korea the US concluded that the dispute with its WWII-

time and post-wartime key ally Britain over Iranian oil issue might create political unrest in Iran which in turn would only strengthen Iranian Communist party-Tudeh. In this context, the US feared that this might enable the Tudeh to seize power and bring Iran into the orbit of the Soviet camp. At the same time, since the US was fully engaged with the Soviet Union in the Korean War (June 25, 1950-July 27, 1953) and there were no signs of end of the global struggle against Communism in immediate sight, Washington concluded that if needed, it was impossible to move with military decision in Iran without British assistance. Therefore, it preferred for waiting game in the oil dispute in the hope that at an opportune moment it could further its interests. Therefore, it would be not unjustified to conclude here that while US was in full engagement with Korean war, the US in coordination with Britain initiated a series of efforts to negotiate with Mosaddeq with a view to buying time after realizing that he would not accept 50-50 profit-sharing. The US also realized that the waiting game would succeed because Mosaddeq might not be easily removed from power while his successor might not deviate radically from his stance regarding oil nationalization when the current of Iranian nationalism at its zenith.

Given the above-mentioned facts, scholars are in agreement that more urgent was the need to back the Mosaddeq's nationalist government at a time when Iran was fighting for economic independence which the US did not provide. Instead, the US wasted time and threw Iran's nationalist government into political chaos and economic hardship. Meanwhile, US attitude towards Iran's nationalist Prime Minister Mosaddeq radically changed when in mid-July 1952 power struggle broke out between the Shah and Prime Minister Mosaddeq. After a row, Mosaddeq was reappointed Prime Minister on July 22, 1952 along with the post of Minister of War, a position then held by the Shah as Commander-in-Chief of the Iranian armed forces.

By an irony of history it was on that same day that the ICJ, after a period, recognized Iran's right to nationalize its assets if compensation were paid to the company and finally handed down its decision that it had no jurisdiction in the oil dispute, implying that the matter came under Iranian law, and that Iran had the right to nationalize by a vote of 9 to 5.<sup>17</sup> This ICJ's decision not only increased Mosaddeq's power base in Iran but also made stronger than the Shah since by then he was in control of the Ministry of War. After this development, Iranian bid for complete national independence under Mosaddeq took a new turn from possibility to probability. The US feared such powerful Mosaddeq as it did so previously in the case of the Shah in 1949.<sup>18</sup> Meanwhile, after assuming the office of premiership for the second time Mosaddeq was hopeful that the British, having lost their case in the World Court, would be more compromising regarding oil dispute. Mosaddeq took initiative to open dialogue with Britain and kept US ambassador Loy Henderson closely informed about his efforts. But this did not produce any results because since spring 1952 the Truman administration decided that it might be best to look to a successor government in Iran to settle the oil dispute and to lead Iran away from the Soviet orbit and for that the US government

was closely working with its ally Britain to protect their interests in Iran. In this context, on August 30, 1952, President Truman and Prime Minister Churchill sent a joint proposal to Mosaddeq outlining a formula for settling the oil dispute. The joint proposal asked Mosaddeq to allow the return of AIOC to its old position in Iran and accept arbitration by the ICJ based on the company's position before it was nationalized. The proposal made it clear that if Mosaddeq complied, Britain would lift its economic embargo and the US would give Iran \$10 million in aid. Prime Minister Mosaddeq rejected the proposal outright.

According to R. K. Ramazani, the joint proposal signaled a degree of harmony between the US and Great Britain with respect to the Iranian situation that had not existed before. In fact, the Truman administration supported "Anglo-American unity" policy on Iran in the context that Britain was supporting the US in Korea, and refused to send a US oil executive named Alton Jones to visit Iran at Mosaddeq's request in August 1952. Thus Cold War considerations plus oil economy forced Washington into a partnership with London and Truman followed Churchill's policy of isolating Mosaddeq. After the rejection of the Truman-Churchill proposal by Mosaddeq, his decision to sever diplomatic relations with Britain on October 22, 1952, threw the US into tension. Because by then central to US thinking was the imperative of maintaining strong ties with Britain. Therefore, faced with an apparent choice between Britain and Mosaddeq, the US chose Britain instead of Iran's Mosaddeq. However, the Truman administration did not go to support the British design of removing Mosaddeq by mounting a coup d'état perhaps not to tarnish the image of President Truman as a proponent of democracy and nationalism in the Third World. But in fact, as history clearly indicates, by then the US changed its policy from one of so-called diplomacy and conciliation to one intervention and confrontation. James A. Bill has identified four reasons of such US change of policy towards Iran including the US preoccupation with the communist challenge in Iran, the US concerns about the accessibility of the rich Iranian oil reserves to the Western world, Britain's successful campaign to bring the US to accept their approach to the oil crisis and Mosaddeq's own political methodology and philosophy of neutrality in the bipolar world at a time when the Cold War was on the rise.<sup>19</sup>

Given this changed scenario of Anglo-US relations over the ongoing oil dispute, the Truman administration worked only to isolate Mosaddeq and his nationalist government. Following the January 1953 takeover by the new Eisenhower administration, Mosaddeq attempted to gain the new US President's support by accusing the AIOC of colonialism, and the British government of seeking to regain its pre-1951 position in Iran. But he failed to convince President Eisenhower because by then the British intrigues successfully convinced the new Eisenhower administration of the usefulness of a coup d'état in Iran, invoking the idea of "Communist Threat" in Iran with Mosaddeq in power succeeded. As a consequence, Washington's policy toward Anglo-Iranian oil

dispute had shifted from blueprint to reality for a coup d'état against Iran's Prime Minister Mosaddeq in August 1953 which was a watershed in Iran-US relations to which we now turn to.

## Notes and References of Section II of Chapter 2

1. For detail see: Mostafa Elm, *Oil, Power and Principle: ... , op., cit.*, pp. 7-9; James A. Bill, *The Eagle and the Lion: ... , op., cit.*, p. 57.
2. Firstly, strong anti-foreign sentiment among the Iranian and the rise of political nationalism to its zenith under Dr. Mohammad Mosaddeq. Secondly, the weak and untenable position of Great Britain in the wake of the WWII. Thirdly, the adoption of the First Seven-Year Development Plan (1949-1955) by Iranian government in March 1949. In the plan, Iran embarked on economic expansion through the adoption of this comprehensive Seven-Year Development Plan which included programmes to improve agriculture, education and public health. Fourthly, granting of the US-owned oil companies in Venezuela and in Saudi Arabia an offer of 50-50 oil profit-sharing in 1948 and in 1950 respectively. Finally, Iranian frustration with British imperial behaviour coupled with concrete economic grievances against the AIOC grew considerably since the AIOC was an important political power in Iran and functioning as a "state within a state." This very status of the AIOC was intolerable to Iranians and this understandably fueled the Iranians' sense of nationalism.
3. Mostafa Elm, *Oil, Power and Principle: ... , op., cit.*, p. 52; Kristen Blake, *op., cit.*, pp. 50-51.
4. Kuross A. Samii, *Involvement by Invitation: ... , op., cit.*, p. 151.
5. Amin Saikal, *The Rise and Fall of the Shah: Iran from Autocracy to Religious rule*, Princeton University Press, USA, First Published in 1980, With a Preface by the Author, 2009, p. 41.
6. Mostafa T. Zahrani, 'The Coup That Changed the Middle East: Mosaddeq v. The CIA in Retrospect', *World Policy Journal*, Vol. 19, No. 2, Summer, 2002, p. 95.
7. Barry Rubin, *Paved with Good Intentions: ... , op., cit.*, pp. 43-45.
8. Bizhan Jazani, *Capitalism and Revolution in Iran*, Zed Press, London, 1982, p. 28.
9. For detail, see: Steve Marsh, *Anglo-American Relations and Cold War Oil: Crisis in Iran*, Palgrave Macmillan, New York, 2003.
10. Peter L. Hahn and Mary Ann Heiss (ed.), *Empire and Revolution: The United States and the Third World since 1945*, Ohio State University Press, USA 2001, p. 180.
11. Mark J. Gasiorowski, 'The 1953 Coup D'état in Iran', *op., cit.*, p. 267.
12. Fakhreddin Azimi, *The Quest for Democracy in Iran: ... , op., cit.*, p. 146.
13. See: Mary Ann Heiss, 'The United States and Great Britain Navigate the Anglo-Iranian Oil Crisis', *Council on Middle East Studies*, The MacMillan Center for International and Area Studies, USA, p. 83. Available at: <http://www.isn.ethz.ch/Digital-Library/Publications/Detail/?lng=en&id=58240>
14. Recently declassified documents of US State Department disclosed that the US wanted to get contracts of oil resources in Iran during this time as both Pakistan and Iran were enjoying cordial ties. As the Pakistan's first Prime Minister Nawabzada Liaquat Ali Khan (1947-1951) refused to use his office for securing oil contracts in Iran for US corporations, he was murdered by CIA's Afghan agent Syed Akbar on October 16, 1951. See: *Pakistan Today*, April 17, 2015, <https://www.pakistantoday.com.pk/2015/04/17/secret-is-out-americans-murdered-liaquat-ali-khan/>
15. Peter Avery et. el. (ed.), *The Cambridge History of Iran*, Vol. 7, Cambridge University Press, New York, 1991, p. 258.
16. Mostafa Elm, *op., cit.*, p. 105.
17. R.W.B., 'Dr. Musaddiq and After', *The World Today*, Vol. 9, No. 10, October, 1953, p. 422; Rouhollah K. Ramazani, *Iran's Foreign Policy, 1941-1973: ... , op., cit.*, p. 224.
18. It may be recalled that when in 1949 the Shah sought US support in the creation of a strong Senate for more political power the US refrained from supporting him.
19. James A. Bill, *The Eagle and the Lion: ... , op., cit.*, p. 79.

## Section III

### The 1953 Coup D'état: Watershed in Iran-US Relations

The climax of US low-intensity hostility towards Mosaddeq-led Iranian nationalist government because of the nationalization of Iran's oil industry and the resultant Anglo-Iranian oil crisis of 1951-1953 reached a new climax on August 19, 1953 when the US government with the aid of its intelligence—CIA and British intelligence—MI6,<sup>1</sup> successfully mounted a coup d'état code-named Operation AJAX and overthrew the *Time* magazine's "Man of the Year" for 1951 (published on January 7, 1952), "The Iranian George Washington,"<sup>2</sup> the popular, nationalist and democratically elected rightful Prime Minister of Iran Dr. Mohammad Mosaddeq (1951-1953). In essence, the 1953 coup d'état or the "28 Mordad 1332" as it is known by its Iranian date, was a transformative point and watershed in Iran-US relations which unfolded another new chapter in the history of Iran-US relations.

By now, it is seen as incontrovertible that the Operation AJAX was an American operation from beginning to end. Declassified documents of CIA's clandestine history of its involvement in the 1953 regime change in Iran<sup>3</sup> published in *The New York Times* in 2000, and subsequent public confession made by the then US Secretary of State Madeline Albright, and finally the publication of the US policy toward Iran during the 1951-1954 period entitled "Foreign Relations of the United States, 1952-1954, Iran, 1951-1954" by the Department of State in 2017,<sup>4</sup> establish beyond reasonable doubt that the CIA was responsible for the downfall of Mosaddeq's nationalist government in Iran. This final section of chapter 2 critically reviews the Iran-US relations between January 20, 1953 and August 19, 1953 when an unwanted US involvement in Iranian politics got momentum and eventually resulted in the 1953 a coup d'état. As an essential part of the study and to understand the intricacy of Iran-US relations of this time this section explores factors involved US interference in Iranian politics and finally concludes with shedding light on the long-lasting effects of the US-intervened 1953 coup d'état on the subsequent courses of Iran-US relations. The section progresses in the following way:

- a. **Operation AJAX: A Blow to the Growing Iran-US Relations**
- b. **US Motives in the 1953 Coup D'état: A Brief Overview**
- c. **The Legacy of the 1953 Coup D'état**
- d. **Conclusion**

**a. Operation AJAX: A Blow to the Growing Iran-US Relations**

As reviewed in the previous section, since the start of the Anglo-Iranian oil dispute in March 1951, Iran-US relationship was not going well. The Truman administration, which had provided false hope to the Iranian nationalists of terminating the British exploitation in Iran, was finally seen busy protecting the Anglo-US interests. By adopting these opposing policies Washington was seriously working for a hidden agenda and for that it adopted a calculated policy toward Iran and the Anglo-Iranian oil dispute. The previous section also shows that the Truman administration was waiting for an opportune moment (by killing time in the negotiations and by not pressuring Great Britain for a peaceful settlement) to turn Iranian situation to Washington's favor. The much-expected opportune moment came at long last when Eisenhower assumed the office of US presidency in January 1953 while the US involvement in the Korean War decreased considerably and finally ended in late July 1953. Meanwhile, in early January 1953, Iran's Prime Minister Mosaddeq cabled Eisenhower to secure US support for the political and economic independence of the Iranians. Eisenhower replied that the future Iran-US "relationship would be completely free of any suspicion" during his administration.<sup>5</sup> Within a brief span of time this appeared to be a bluff, because a new US approach to the ongoing Anglo-Iranian oil dispute began to develop upon Eisenhower's entrance to office on January 20, 1953. The taking of office by Eisenhower soon brought a coordinated Anglo-American front against Iran as a result of political, economic and strategic considerations in the post-WWII era. Eisenhower invited the British Foreign Secretary Anthony Eden to the White House to find ways of solving the Iranian problem. This event actually gave the CIA and the MI6 the go-ahead to wage the so-called "just war" of removing the towering figure of Iran—Mosaddeq—from power.

Essentially, Eisenhower's Iran policy was simple and clear: either to topple Mosaddeq or to abandon Iran to communism.<sup>6</sup> The Eisenhower administration preferred the first option without letting know the US real motive of removing Mosaddeq from power either to Mosaddeq or to the Iranians but highlighting the fear of communism and Mosaddeq's pro-communist attitude although evidence spoke otherwise. For example, in 1952, Richard N. Frye, a co-author of the book *The United States and Turkey and Iran* has characteristically asked a question: "Has Iran rejected the West and cast in her lot with the Soviets?" Then concluding that despite Iran's recent move in regard to the Voice of America, its barter agreement with the Soviet Union, and the nationalization of oil industry, he categorically stated that the answer to the question was "no."<sup>7</sup> This prediction by academics was supported by CIA's field level officers in Iran. On the basis of such US intelligence report on November 20, 1952, President Truman approved a policy paper (NSC 136/1), which asserted that 'communist forces will probably not gain control of the Iranian government during 1953'. The US policy paper was based on US intelligence prediction which

stated that Mosaddeq could hold on at least until the end of 1953 without great difficulty.<sup>8</sup> These all show that Mosaddeq was neither pro-Soviet nor pro-Communist and his moves to forge closer ties with the Communist Tudeh Party and moving his country closer to the Soviet Union through new trade agreements were nothing but attempts to give his country's economy a boost and to win over US assistance for his financially strapped government.<sup>9</sup>

Yet, in an effort to find out a successor government in Iran, a policy that was also pursued by President Truman during his last days in office, Eisenhower began to consider the idea of a British-proposed coup d'état against Mosaddeq.<sup>10</sup> In this context, the perceived threat of the Tudeh and the possibility of Iran's going to the communist camp was nothing but part of US rationale behind the 1953 coup d'état.<sup>11</sup> The scholar-writer Ervand Abrahamian has argued that throughout the crisis, the communist threat was more of a rhetorical device than a real issue and this had been interpreted as part of the cold-war discourse.<sup>12</sup> It is important, however, to state here that Secretary of State John Foster Dulles and his brother and the CIA Director named Allen Dulles who had close links with the American oil companies were prime supporters of such idea of working for a successor government of Mosaddeq in Iran. They along with the major US oil companies successfully put barrier to reaching out any settlement while in late January of 1953 the Dulles brothers told their British counterparts that they were ready to move against Mosaddeq.<sup>13</sup> They with an ulterior motive coloured the Iranian affair with a Cold War flavor made the President Eisenhower believe that Iran's fragile economy due to oil crisis might lead Mosaddeq to turn to the Soviet Union.

On the basis of the recent declassified documents, Ervand Abrahamian has claimed that in high-level discussions and in follow-up discussions between the Foreign Office and the State Department showed that the two concluded that the "situation in Iran was becoming increasingly serious" and Mosaddeq's government was "essentially a bad government" and that the Shah should be "encouraged to replace him with a general."<sup>14</sup> Thus because of Dulles brothers' advice and influenced by US oil companies, President Eisenhower finally concluded that a coup against Mosaddeq was a must. As part of Eisenhower's preferred option of removing Mosaddeq through a coup, his Ambassador in Iran Loy Wesley Henderson took hard-line on Mosaddeq. An instrumental in the closer relations between Washington and London on the Anglo-Iranian oil dispute, Henderson described Iran as a "sick country" and Mosaddeq as "one of its most sick leaders" and 'neurotic and periodically unstable' in early January 1953 following long-drawn abortive negotiations over oil dispute.<sup>15</sup> It was he who on February 20, 1953, handed Mosaddeq the Anglo-US final proposal for specific compensation for nationalization which Mosaddeq rejected outright.<sup>16</sup>



Upon Mosaddeq's rejection of the proposal on March 20, 1953, a pro-British American, Henderson became discernibly anti-Mosaddeq and began referring to him as "a madman" and warned the policymakers in Washington that Mosaddeq might do to the Americans what he had done to the British, namely, break off diplomatic relations. It was under such situation the US government showed complete reluctance to support Mosaddeq's government politically and economically and concluded that only hope of saving Iran was a regime change in Iran by unseating Mosaddeq.<sup>17</sup> Then the Eisenhower administration authorized the CIA for planning a coup during the following month. To that end, on April 4, 1953, Eisenhower allocated \$1 million to the Tehran CIA station for pre-coup covert operations against Mosaddeq or for use "in any way that would bring about the fall of Mosaddeq".<sup>18</sup>

The US government also made a comprehensive study on "Factors Involved in the Overthrow of Mosaddeq" on April 16, 1953. After these initiatives, as part of the blueprint, the US government and the CIA agents in Iran began a concerted campaign to demonize Mosaddeq in the eyes of Iranians. With the initial approval the US intelligence agency—the CIA was preparing the road map to a coup d'état against Mosaddeq. At the outset, the British intelligence MI6 came with a blueprint named Operation Boot however, it was the CIA that adopted the final plan called Operation TPAJAX or AJAX (hereinafter AJAX). Before the AJAX was put into operation, the American coup planners struck a "big deal" confirming written guarantees from the British regarding an early oil agreement in the spirit of good will and equality in the post-coup Iran.<sup>19</sup> The US government also took diplomatic and economic measures to distance itself from the Mosaddeq government to show Washington's increased displeasure. This was first demonstrated when Secretary Dulles skipped Iran while he had made a trip to Pakistan, Saudi Arabia, Iraq and Turkey in May 1953 to see at first-hand what steps the US could take to secure the region from communist influence. Reportedly, Ambassador Henderson advised the Secretary of State to avoid Iran lest his presence be regarded as an US endorsement of the Mosaddeq regime.<sup>20</sup>

On May 28, 1953, under increasing economic pressure, Prime Minister Mosaddeq sought financial aid to the Eisenhower administration through a letter. In the letter Mosaddeq mentioned that he had hoped the President would look at the Iranian situation sympathetically and mentioned that the Iranian nation hoped that "with the help and assistance of the American government the obstacles placed in the way of the sale of Iranian oil can be removed, and that if the American government is not able to effect a removal of such obstacles, it can render effective economic assistance to enable Iran to utilize its other resources."<sup>21</sup> Prime Minister Mosaddeq requested the US President to keep the contents of the letter secret. However, the contents of Mosaddeq's letter and Eisenhower's reply were released to US press. Such US attitude horrified Mosaddeq's supporters and undermined Mosaddeq's position in Iran. For example, the pro-

communist Tudeh castigated Mosaddeq for asking US for financial aid, which they termed as humiliating. In fact, President Eisenhower with an ulterior motive used Mosaddeq's letter to drive a wedge between Mosaddeq and his supporters. That is why, on June 29 he brusquely rejected the request of Mosaddeq and published the letter even before the response reached Iran. In his response to Mosaddeq's request, Eisenhower wrote that the US was "in no position to extend more aid to Iran or to purchase Iranian oil" in the absence of an oil settlement. By diplomatic standard, the US President behaved with Mosaddeq in the most unconventional and uncivilized manner, of course, intentionally to further the AJAX plan. However, this US conduct with the Iranian Prime Minister generated strong anti-US sentiment among the Iranian nationalists in general, and among the Mosaddeq's followers in particular.

At this state, the US low-intensity hostility toward Mosaddeq's nationalist government that had begun following the nationalization of Iran's oil industry turned into open hostility toward Mosaddeq and his nationalist government. More or less at the same time, other anti-Mosaddeq steps were followed. On June 25, 1953, a meeting took place in the State Department. The meeting was attended by Secretary of State John Foster Dulles, the Director of the CIA Allen Dulles, the Chief of CIA's Near East and Asia Division Kermit Roosevelt, Ambassador Henderson, Under Secretary of State General Walter Bedell Smith and other officials. They discussed the fate of Mosaddeq government once for all and approved the AJAX for the CIA-code-named of the 1953 coup d'état in Iran. They decided that the Operation AJAX would be carried out over the next months.

President Eisenhower approved the AJAX plan on July 11, 1953. Events now moved rapidly to desired destination. The US government appointed Kermit Roosevelt, a believer of 'a throne abolished might be restored', 'a revolution accomplished might be discredited', and 'a paradise lost regained,' for the Operation AJAX. Known by his pseudonym—James Lockridge in Iran Kermit Roosevelt made the US Embassy in Tehran key place for the CIA-MI6 operatives (for which the Iranians later justifiably termed the US Embassy in Tehran as the 'Nest of Spies'<sup>22</sup>) and expanded the CIA's network of agents. In Tehran he had been assisted there by other CIA members including Eric Pollard, Roger Gorian, Joseph Goodwin George Carrol, Richard Cottam, Donald N. Wilber and others.<sup>23</sup> The CIA and MI6 through their agents, who with the usual covers as cultural, press, labour, and commercial attachés, started covert efforts to manipulate the political process in Iran in many ways. To understand the course of Iran-US relations of that time some are discussed very briefly.

**Firstly**, the CIA-MI6 agents instigated and then intensified a 'war of nerves' against Prime Minister Mosaddeq. To that end, they adopted an all out effort to undermine Mosaddeq's support

base and for that they began vigorous campaigns against Mosaddeq which were to include a massive ‘gray’ (disguised) and ‘black’ (deliberately misrepresented) propagandas. Initially, the CIA took control of four-fifth of Tehran’s newspapers in the months preceding the coup and began the propaganda war against Mosaddeq. American-written anti-Mosaddeq articles and cartoons began to appear in those newspapers. Articles and cartoons were regularly published wherein Mosaddeq was clearly depicted as a communist collaborator and as a fanatic. The CIA Art team prepared a considerable number of anti-Mosaddeq cartoons, which were reproduced *en masse* in CIA-controlled newspapers in Tehran while the *New York Times* routinely used the word “dictator” to describe Mosaddeq throughout 1953. According to Stephen Kinzer, during ‘the spring and summer of 1953, not a day passed without at least one CIA-subsidized mullah, news commentator, or politician denouncing Prime Minister Mosaddeq’.<sup>24</sup> The ‘war of nerves’ against Mosaddeq also involved portraying his government as favouring the communists, threatening Islam, creating public disorder, giving power to unscrupulous politicians, and deliberately leading the country to economic disorder.<sup>25</sup>

**Secondly**, since the AJAX plan included promises of necessary US aid to Iranian political and religious leaders who were ready to support CIA’s efforts in Iran, the CIA allocated \$10,000 to purchase the cooperation of members of the Majlis. Thus the CIA succeeded in buying assistance of some Majlis members including Ayatullah Abul Quassem Qashani who was once Mosaddeq’s strong supporter and who played crucial role in restoring Mosaddeq his office in July 1952 by issuing a fatwa in favor of Mosaddeq. **Thirdly**, the CIA and MI6 agents made concerted efforts to alarm Iranian religious leaders by giving them threatening phone calls in the name of the pro-communist Tudeh party.<sup>26</sup> They also bombed the home of a prominent Muslim Shia cleric, and sent leaflets to others in the name of the Tudeh heralding the imminent dawn of a bright new “atheistic” republic which frightened common Muslims and future leaders of the Islamic Republic. **Fourthly**, in an effort to demonize Mosaddeq the CIA showed interest in finding in him some form of Jewish ancestry. **Fifthly**, as part of the destabilizing campaign of Mosaddeq’s government, weapons were dropped quietly to the tribes opposing Mosaddeq at incite of the CIA. Even an armed gang of retired officers was formed. This gang had links with General Fazlullah Zahedi and Baqai, who kidnapped General Mohammad Afshartous, Mosaddeq’s chief police and killed him brutally tortured. In fact, prior to the coup, the CIA in collaboration with MI6 staged a powerful drama of kidnapping, political intrigues, and assassinations, psychological warfare, and riots by hired mobs.<sup>27</sup>

We now turn to the final preparation of the CIA-led 1953 coup d’état. As the CIA masterminded the coup against Prime Minister Mosaddeq in the name of the Shah, therefore, the final preparation for the coup was linked with the Shah. In this regard, the Shah’s co-operation was

considered all but indispensable. The CIA and MI6 made untiring efforts to get the hesitant Shah on their side and eventually they succeeded. In this difficult task, CIA involved many personalities including the Shah's twin sister Princess Ashraf, General Norman Schwarzkopf Sr. (father of General H. Norman Schwarzkopf, the commander of the Operation Desert Storm in the 1991 Gulf War) who had commanded the local gendarmerie during the WWII. As part of a "cover mission" assigned by the CIA, Norman Schwarzkopf came to Tehran carrying "a couple of large bags" into which were stuffed several million dollars in cash, clearly to speed up Kermit Roosevelt's move and to buy off loyalty of army officers holding crucial positions.<sup>28</sup> He also met with the Shah on August 1, 1953 and assured him that if he cooperated with the coup, the US would give him full support. Following this President Eisenhower had made a gesture to get the Shah. In a speech delivered at a conference in Seattle on August 4, 1953, Eisenhower stated that Mosaddeq, in his drive to get rid of the Majlis, was supported by Iran's communist party which was "very ominous for the United States" and for the free world. Mosaddeq's effort "must be blocked now."<sup>29</sup> The vacillating Shah got clear message from the US President, yet his hesitation continued.

Finally he issued two *firmons* or royal orders (see Appendix) on August 12, 1953. Of the two *firmons*, the first was related to the dismissal of Mosaddeq and the second was related to the appointment of General Zahedi to premiership. In this way, after securing the Shah's crucial approval, the original date for the coup was fixed on August 16, 1953. When the first plan had been put into effect in the late hours of August 15, it quickly went wrong. On hearing the news about the abortive coup, the Shah fled on his private plane first to Baghdad, then two days later to Rome where the US Ambassador was in constant contact with him.<sup>30</sup> Mosaddeq came on the air and announced victory over a coup attempt organized by the Shah and "foreign elements". Following this abortive coup attempt, anti-US and anti-Shah demonstrations engulfed the streets of Tehran. Amidst this heated situation, CIA operatives made mad dashes back to the security of the US Embassy and other hideouts while jubilant crowds took to the streets chanting, "Victory to the Nation!" and "Mosaddeq Has Won!"<sup>31</sup> Before long, the CIA caused Mosaddeq's victory wrong.

It is pertinent to state that immediately after this initial failure, the coup planners in Washington, Cyprus and Tehran gave up in desperation, while the State Department hinted to improve Washington's relations with Mosaddeq's government. In a memorandum prepared for the President the State Department recommended that the US must "take a whole new look at the Iranian situation and probably have to snuggle up to Mosaddeq if we are going to save anything."<sup>32</sup> Ambassador Henderson, who was on leave since August 4, 1953, rushed back to Tehran on August 17, 1953, with the stated aim to mend Iran-US relations. With Henderson back

in Tehran, things began changing rapidly since Kermit Roosevelt did not give up his hope for a regime change as he brainstormed new strategies and placed forth an instantly-made second plan. Under the new plan, Roosevelt and his CIA agents who preferred to stay with him began to reproduce and publicly distribute large quantities of the Shah's *firman* relating to the dismissal of Mosaddeq in the days following the failure of the first coup attempt in an effort to convince the Iranian people that it was Mosaddeq who had staged the coup and that General Fazlullah Zahedi was the legal head of the government. This action produced desired results as the Iranians were easily convinced and they learnt that the Shah had been forced to leave Iran because of Mosaddeq's actions. Simultaneously, the CIA-influenced newspapers ran fabricated interviews with Zahedi whom the Shah had appointed Prime Minister by a CIA-induced *firman* stressed that only his government was legal. While such CIA-renewed actions were gaining momentum, the date for the second coup was scheduled on August 19, 1953. Once the date was chosen, Kermit Roosevelt and his CIA agents quickly moved to execute the plan. To make success the second plan, Kermit Roosevelt spent \$50,000 for arranging "black" crowds that would rampage through the streets shouting their allegiance to communism and Mosaddeq.<sup>33</sup>

He also spent money to arrange mobs who, as will be discussed, in time demonstrated in support of the Shah. Thus grand intriguer—Kermit Roosevelt—quickly arranged for mobs both supporting and opposing Mosaddeq to begin protesting. Mosaddeq, as a democratically elected Prime Minister naively ordered police not to interfere with people's right to demonstrate. So, the mob was able to rampage at will as per Kermit Roosevelt's instruction. Amidst the anti-Shah and anti-US demonstrations, Ambassador Henderson visited Mosaddeq in the late afternoon of August 18, 1953. During his visit Henderson told Mosaddeq that the US was increasingly worried about the Tudeh influence and the future of Iran. He then promised aid if law and order was reestablished and thus induced Mosaddeq to deploy army to clear the streets that were paraded by demonstrators chanting slogans and threatening telephonic calls saying "Yankee Go Home." In actuality, this was a part of the second plan and that was what Kermit Roosevelt wanted. Henderson informed Mosaddeq that the US government would evacuate all Americans from Iran if he did not move accordingly. The coup-maker Kermit Roosevelt himself recognized this fact.<sup>34</sup>

According to Ervand Abrahamian, this sounded like an ultimatum to Mosaddeq, as he thought that if such action was not taken the US would cease recognizing him as the lawful head of the government.<sup>35</sup> Although during the meeting Mosaddeq accused the CIA of being behind the issuance of the royal decrees,<sup>36</sup> Mosaddeq assured Henderson of deploying army immediately and requested him not to take Americans out of Iran. When Mosaddeq deployed army many officers, as instructed, loyal to the Shah and to the CIA-supported Zahedi (as they had previously

been paid by the CIA) turned against Mosaddeq. This opened the window of opportunity for Kermit Roosevelt. As just noted, the CIA agents had previously hired another group of athletic, clubs members, jugglers, wrestlers, tumblers and fire-eaters who now at the head of a well-armed, well-paid mob these bazaar celebrities, thugs, poor whom Barry Rubin incorrectly mentioned as “genuine demonstrations”,<sup>37</sup> took to streets, proclaiming loyalty to the Shah and filled the air with chants of “Death to Mosaddeq!” and “Long live the Shah!” With this demonstration the final moment came. The CIA-paid and Shah-supported army quickly moved to act and they captured Radio Tehran and announced the defeat of Mosaddeq. William Blum has mentioned that the US Military Mission in Iran played an outstanding role at the last moment to succeed the coup d’état. According to Chaitanya Dave—author of *Crimes against Humanity: A Shocking History of U.S. crimes since 1776*—thus perhaps with only \$7 million, the CIA overthrew a democratically elected popular nationalist Prime Minister of Iran and with it a budding democracy.<sup>38</sup> Thus the US showed its utmost hostility towards Iran’s nationalist government of Mosaddeq as a result of which Prime Mosaddeq was removed from power and with it the growing bilateral relations between Tehran and Washington that began since 1945 on the basis of mutual trust and integrity came to a sudden halt.

#### **b. US Motives in the 1953 Coup D’état: A Brief Overview**

It will not be easy to figure out the bottleneck of current Iran-US relations if the US motives in the 1953 coup d’état are left unexplained. Analysts and scholars differ in their interpretations of the US motives in the 1953 coup d’état. Some scholars have argued that the motives for US action against Mosaddeq were primarily the fear of a communist take-over of Iran, rather than oft-argued US desire to gain share of Iran’s oil industry, while others are seen to interpret the 1953 coup d’état as the result of the power struggle between the Shah and his Prime Minister Mosaddeq. Historically, these are only the misrepresentations of the issue leading someone to misjudge of the fact. A careful study will help us to conclude that the combination of political, strategic and economic motives led the US to stage the 1953 coup d’état in Iran that hugely affected future courses of Iran-US relations which is still a driving factor in their relationship.

**In the first place**, during the nineteenth and twentieth centuries Iran had a great appeal to the Anglo-Russian powers for its geo-strategic location. For the same reason, the Eisenhower administration considered Iran as a strategic buffer between the Soviet Union and the Middle East region.<sup>39</sup> Moreover, Iran had immense oil wealth, a long border with the Soviet Union, a Communist Party (Tudeh) and a nationalist Prime Minister (Mosaddeq). In the Cold War context, policy-makers in Washington feared that the loss of Iran to the communist bloc would outflank Turkey and certainly provide the Soviet Union with a springboard for the domination of the entire Middle East and Eastern Mediterranean.<sup>40</sup> Retrospectively, the US government since the

Truman administration had been working vigorously for regional security alliances against communist Russia. The formation of NATO in 1949 is an example of that. Although the Truman administration did not put much emphasis on building a security arrangement with the Middle Eastern nations, President Eisenhower and his Secretary of State John Foster Dulles engaged their all efforts to create such security arrangement in the Middle East to contain the Soviet Union. For example, in February 1953, President Eisenhower professed a definite need for regional security alliances against what he called the ‘enemies who are plotting our destruction.’<sup>41</sup> While Dulles defined the Middle East region from Morocco to Pakistan and along with British government emphasized to create a Middle East Defense Organization (hereinafter MEDO) which was originally a British conception. Although Dulles despaired of a MEDO including Arab states but he seemed to be hopeful about the countries closer to the Soviet Union and in the name of ‘northern tier’<sup>42</sup>—a concept he introduced on June 1, 1953. They both realized that the policy of containment of Communist Russia required the maintenance of a pro-Western Iran tied to the US through Western security arrangements. Because of ongoing crisis in Iran over its oil issue, the ‘northern tier’ security arrangement became increasingly attractive.<sup>43</sup> Mindful of such regional security alliance, the US government resolved to initiate a plan of using Iran as a part of an anti-Communist ‘northern tier’ along with Turkey, Iraq and Pakistan.<sup>44</sup> But due to the 1951 nationalization of its oil industry and due the subsequent dispute with Britain plus the neutralist thrust of Mosaddeq’s foreign policy, Iran stood in the way to prevent the US from achieving its policy objectives. Therefore, conducting coup d’état against Mosaddeq by undermining Iran’s national movement became an essential part of US policy option and because of Iran’s geostrategic position and anti-communist stance among the Middle East countries, the country was the target for US.<sup>45</sup>

**In the second place**, Mosaddeq, who was in his time a titanic figure, shook an empire (i.e. Great Britain) and changed the world with the nationalization of Iran’s oil industry in 1951 and as a result, global powers including the US sought to influence him but failed in the long run. What made Mosaddeq the nemesis, the tormentor, the implacable and dreaded foe of the AIOC and the US alike was Mosaddeq’s conviction that Iranians must rule themselves and not submit to the will of foreigners. Rather than to appease the superpower—the US by his actions Mosaddeq eagerly wanted to preserve Iran’s neutrality and to keep all foreigners out of the country with the ultimate goal that Iran for Iranians which caused a period of extreme tension in Washington during his premiership from March 1951 to August 1953. In fact, as a ‘one-Asia man’ as termed by Acheson, Mosaddeq did not want Iran to take sides in the East-West conflict. Thus it was Mosaddeq’s behaviour as much as his political philosophy of “Negative Equilibrium”<sup>46</sup> whose fundamental assumptions clashed with those of the third-power policy (for which Iran had been

working and the US emerged as the third power in Iran since 1946) and thus ran counter to US interests in bipolar international system clearly unnerved contemporary US policymakers and diplomats.

They feared when their intelligence concluded that Mosaddeq was leading a national revolution and that intransigence would only make his political position stronger. James A. Bill has commented that throughout his political career, Mosaddeq had one preeminent political preoccupation: a thorough opposition to foreign intervention and interference in Iran. Bill has quoted a French newspaper that read: "The opposition called him an Anglophile. The Russians entitled him the servant of American imperialism. The British labeled him a Communist. But, in the end, it was clear that Musaddiq was a national champion who without any foreign support whatsoever fought for the independence and freedom of his homeland."<sup>47</sup> As a staunch anti-communist and an anti-imperialist nationalist, Mosaddeq intended to keep Iran from being controlled by any foreign country or company. Policy makers in Washington saw that Iran's nationalist Prime Minister Mosaddeq who had been launching a sort of battle over oil issue without befriending with the West while appearing as a hero in the eyes of the Third World nations with the success of his Negative Equilibrium. They concluded that Iran's move toward nationalization of its oil industry under nationalist Prime Minister Mosaddeq and his policy of Negative Equilibrium posed serious challenge to US interests. Therefore, from the very start the US saw Iran's nationalization of oil industry primarily as an attack on US and European "global interests."<sup>48</sup> Then it came to conclusion that if allowed, Iranian nationalism would set example in the Middle East which would certainly jeopardize the interests of the West. While Mosaddeq's stance incurred anger of the US government Shah's desire for the alignment with the West viewed positively from Washington. At the end of the day, the US government decided to support the pro-West Shah to safeguard its interest in the area and approved the overthrow of a democratically government of Mosaddeq. This was what that antagonized the US most and Mosadeq's such position made him an arch enemy of the US. The US antagonism and fear increased in the later months as Mosaddeq's power base in Iran also enhanced.

Meanwhile, from early 1953 when the intensity of the Korean War was on the march, there was a clear policy change under the new Eisenhower administration. The Eisenhower administration viewed that there was no third alternative between Soviet communism and Western democracy and the Third World must align themselves either with the US or with the Soviet Union, and in that great battle of ideologies stemming from Washington and Moscow, there was no place of hesitant neutrality. Thus, President Eisenhower gave no place of Third World neutrality in his foreign policy considerations. Given the fact, US President Eisenhower first viewed negatively Mosaddeq's middle course of action in the Cold War which he developed in the name of



“Negative Equilibrium”. Journalist scholar Stephen Kinzer has stated that Eisenhower administration identified Mosaddeq and his neutralism or “Negative Equilibrium” as hostile to US goals and interests in the Persian Gulf as well as in the Middle East.<sup>49</sup> Another scholar named Kuross A. Samii has described that when the heightening US fears of destabilization in Iran after futile protracted negotiations of the oil dispute became evident policy makers in Washington concluded after the meeting of National Security Council in early January 1953 that if Western interests and Third World nationalism could not be reconciled, then the latter had to be subdued and controlled. Naturally, Mosaddeq became a prime target, not merely because of his activities in Iran, but also because of the effects of his policies in the Third World.

It was in this context and after being free of Korean War since July 1953, the Eisenhower administration opted for restraining Iranian nationalism in a classic Cold War move viewing it inimical to US interests. But there was a fundamental difficulty. In July 1953, the State Department Director of Iranian Affairs had testified before Congress and told that “Mosaddeq has such tremendous control over the masses of people that it would be very difficult to throw him out.”<sup>50</sup> Then what course of action was left for the US government to follow? Certainly a preemptive action, a policy later fully evolved under President George Bush (2001-2008) about half century later. According to Roby C. Barret, the fear of what might happen drove the decision to take preemptive action in Iran.<sup>51</sup> That is, like the Bush administration of the 21<sup>st</sup> century which removed Iraq’s President Saddam Hussein in 2003, the Eisenhower administration of the mid-20<sup>th</sup> century viewed Iran’s nationalist Prime Minister Mosaddeq that “If you’re not with us you’re against us”<sup>52</sup> and then moved to oust him from power in 1953.

**In the third place**, the US economic interests in Iran played a significant part to influence the Eisenhower administration to conduct the 1953 coup d’état. Although some argued that it was Iran’s geostrategic considerations and not Washington’s desire to destroy Mosaddeq’s movement or to gain control over Iran’s oil or to establish a dictatorship in Iran, that led the US to undertake the 1953 coup,<sup>53</sup> however, there is strong evidence to suggest that the 1953 coup in Iran had been shaped much by the political economy of oil.<sup>54</sup> In 1952, Richard N. Frye has put: “Britain’s major, and long-term, interest in Iran is oil, and since American oil companies contracted to purchase almost 40 per cent of the production of the Anglo-Iranian Oil Company, Persian oil is also of interest to Americans.”<sup>55</sup> In a recent study Darioush Bayandor has categorically mentioned that the manner in which the oil dispute was eventually resolved (where major US oil companies obtained the lion’s share in a new oil consortium which was created to operate Iranian oil following the overthrow of Mosaddeq) must, no doubt, have reinforced the impression of US foul play.<sup>56</sup>

In fact, the US drive for oil interests made the Iranian coup d'état in 1953 inevitable. There is also evidence that the Eisenhower administration was very much favourable to business interests, in particular the oil business. The Dulles brothers who were high-ranked policy makers in the Eisenhower administration and the proponents of the coup had been long time partners in the law firm representing the AIOC in the US.<sup>57</sup> Furthermore, oil was one of the primary reasons why Iran became so important to US since WWII. Since the early days of the Cold War it was US policy that inexpensive oil from the Middle East be used to fuel the post-WWII economic recoveries in Japan and Western Europe in order to avert the kind of economic chaos which the US felt would open the way for communist influence. That is, in addition to serving the interest of American oil companies, the US government was working for Marshall Plan it had initiated in the post-WWII to reconstruct Western Europe with the aid of Middle Eastern oil. The Eisenhower administration also estimated that by 1975 the US-led capitalist bloc would be 90% dependent on Middle Eastern oil and without such supplies Western Europe was not defensible. The US fear was that Mosaddeq's nationalization of Iran's oil industry and subsequent Anglo-Iranian dispute might lead to the stoppage of oil to Washington's Western allies. The US also worried that the Iranian act might set an example for other oil-producing states of the Middle East where the US oil interests were heavily involved. The US government also concluded that if Iran fell into the Soviet sphere, US prestige in the region would be seriously damaged and the will-power of neighbouring countries to resist Soviet penetration would be weakened. As a consequence, in short order the other areas of the Middle East with some 60% of the world's oil reserves, would fall into communist control. This provided the Eisenhower administration a proper ground to think about Iran and its oil seriously during the last days of Anglo-Iranian oil dispute of 1951-1953.

It was also in this context, when the Anglo-American axis came to the realization that Mosaddeq was not going to place Iran's sovereignty and resources (oil) at their disposal because of Mosaddeq's Negative Equilibrium, they decided to remove him from power through waging a propaganda war against him in which he was pictured increasingly but inaccurately as a dangerous fanatic, likely to deliver Iran to the Soviets by exaggerating the so-called fear of communism in Iran. In this regard, the US real fear and the main source of US outrage was a non-Communist nationalist government taking over, in defiance of the West, economic and strategic resources important to the West.<sup>58</sup> Therefore, it is indeed, the decision to overthrow the Mosaddeq government was primarily motivated by the desire to have share in Iran's oil, while US motive for halting the spread of communism was intentionally use to further the first motive. Ervand Abrahamian has rightly viewed: "The 1953 coup has often been depicted as a CIA venture to save Iran from international communism. In fact, it was a joint British-American

venture to preserve the international oil cartel.”<sup>59</sup> My study also suggests that the US move in the oil dispute in a Cold War mentality may bolster its involvement in Iran but it was Iran’s oil that helped US take risk of deposing a democratically elected nationalist Prime Minister from power and thus risking its image in the eyes of the Iranians as well as in the eyes of the Third World nations. Thus the *Realpolitik*<sup>60</sup> which the US handled superbly in 1953 in Iran won the day.

In the light of the above analysis, it may safely be concluded that the US went for regime change in Iran in 1953 and risked its good reputation being tarnished in Iran and sacrificed the steadily growing close relationship with Iran mainly for three reasons: first, for Iran’s geo-strategic position; second, for the fear of a threat posed by the growing influence of Mosaddeq and his political philosophy and national revolution; and third, for helping US oil companies gain a share in Iranian oil production. Beyond these factors, the difference between Western and Eastern cultures played a significant part in the overthrow of Mosaddeq. Peter L. Hahn and Mary Ann Heiss have stated that in the 1953 coup, the US and Britain formed common front against Mosaddeq also from their sense of Western cultural superiority over the culture of developing world where leaders sought to maintain their nations’ independence without aligning themselves with the West.<sup>61</sup> However, we must bear in our mind that this cultural differences only increased the intensity of the above-stated geo-strategic, political and economic factors that hastened Mosaddeq’s downfall and with it the Iran-US relations of mutual trust and integrity.

### **c. The Legacy of the 1953 Coup D’état on Iran-US Relations**

There is no denying the fact that the US-instigated coup d’état of August 19, 1953, against Iran’s Prime Minister Mohammad Mosaddeq is a crucial turning point both in the history of modern Iran as well as in the history of Iran-US relations. The event changed the destiny of Iran as well as the course of Iran-US relations. To some it appeared as “the origins of the US-Iran divide”,<sup>62</sup> and originated “the Iranian people’s justified animosity toward the U.S. government.”<sup>63</sup> US-sponsored coup not only arrested Iran’s gradual development toward asserting its national independence under a popular nationalist leadership; it destroyed a developing democracy in Iran and marked the beginning of 25 years dictatorship of the Shah. Thus ended what appears, in retrospect, to have been Iran’s last chance for the establishment of a liberal reformist government, functioning within a parliamentary constitution. The US reinstated the Shah in 1953 and then supported the Shah’s repressive regime all the way to 1979. By doing so the US sacrificed the democratic aspirations of a nation to a Cold War threat that was more imagined than real.<sup>64</sup> Iranians also saw how the post-1953 take-over of Iranian oil by US and British firms launched the US on a collision course with the Iranian people. Moved by a combination of motives explained above the US, in an unprecedented fashion, brought about a regime change in Iran in 1953 and toppled Mosaddeq from power by showing supreme indifference to the welfare

of the Iranian people. Scholars are in full agreement that the CIA-led 1953 coup d'état in Iran was prompted by a policy that served temporary US interests namely, it helped to remove the so-called communist threat and the US oil companies gained hold on Iran's oil. However, the coup d'état created larger and serious problems in the long run. The long-term consequence of the coup was devastating since it gave birth to an everlasting Iranian hostility toward the US that can explicitly explain the 1979 Islamic Revolution in Iran and the current crisis in Iran-US relations. From the perspective of Iran-US relations, the long-term legacy can be divided into three significant points.

**Firstly**, there is little doubt that the CIA-led 1953 coup d'état changed the Iranian mind-set about the Americans and their government which in turn immensely affected the Iran-US relations. Iranians had a romanticized vision of the Americans and their country. Particularly, after the beginning of cultural, economic and diplomatic interactions between Iran and the US back in the last quarter of the nineteenth century Iranians had developed good impression about the Americans while following the WWII Iranians developed hopeful signs regarding US help in times of need. Iranians generally viewed the US as a savior for Washington's crucial support for Tehran's preservation of full independence in the Azerbaijan Crisis or the Iranian Crisis of 1945-1946, while many of them thought of Americans as friends, supporters of the fragile democracy they had spend half a century trying to build. However, all positive impression and hopes were dashed by a single flip the US made in 1953 in the removal of Iran's democratically elected Prime Minister Mosaddeq. After 1953, majority Iranians who were greatly shocked at the CIA-engineered coup d'état which removed their nationalist Prime Minister Mosaddeq do not trust the US. They saw the 1953 coup as stab in the back since the US played dual role in Iranian affairs between 1951 and 1953: first it encouraged Mosaddeq and his Iranian supporters in the nationalization of Iran's oil industry and then supported and collaborated with its special ally Britain in the 1953 coup that overthrew Mosaddeq's government.

The 1953 coup d'état became the symbol of US betrayal to them. Iranians saw how the CIA-led coup established the US version of imperialism, or more correctly imperialist hegemon over them replacing the British one. Iranians viewed and still view that the 1953 coup d'état in actuality paved the way for a neo-colonialism with the US at its head. Thus the 1953 episode appeared as the rebirth of century-old hatred of the Iranians against the foreign power, now the US. Ervand Abrahamian has rightly observed that the coup d'état permanently tarred the US with British brush of colonial power, and created a perception deep and permanent distrust between Iran and the US.<sup>65</sup> The coup's imprint on Iranian culture was equally deep and fathomless: the suspicion that sinister "foreign hands" controlled Iran and this view prevailed in Iran from 1953 to 1979. True, the 1953 coup d'état ended with the victory for the US and for the Shah, however,

both the Shah and the US paid a hefty price for their victory. In the words of Abbas Milani, “The Shah won the day but lost the war of legitimacy. He and his government were henceforth saddled with the stigma of being an American creation. The Americans on the other hand, lost their privileged position in the hearts and minds of the Persians. The “anti-colonialist” image was replaced with that of the “ugly Americans”.<sup>66</sup> Mostafa T. Zahrani has maintained that for the Americans, the unintended result of the CIA-orchestrated 1953 coup d’état was the rise of political Islam, leading to the 1979 Islamic Revolution and the present continuing impasse in Iran-US relations.<sup>67</sup>

**Secondly**, the 1953 coup d’état has proved disastrous to the nature of future course of Iran-US relations. Between the period 1945 and 1951, Iran-US relations were at their warmest course in long history which followed by a transitional period of disguised hostile relations from March 1951 to August 1953 due to US opposition to Mosaddeq’s nationalization of Iran’s oil industry. To be more clear, the relationship between Iran and the US prior to 1951 was firmly founded on good understanding and mutual respect and trust of sovereignty and integrity. The coup which was the first breach of this type of Iran-US relationship abruptly halted the brief period of evolving friendly Iran-US bilateral relations and turned into the fact of historical tragedy. Of course, the coup initiated a new type of Iran-US relations: state-to-state relationship instead of people-to-people relations that had existed since the inception of bilateral relations in 1883. In the new relationship, the US only accounted for the Shah’s support in achieving Washington’s three principal goals: securing oil, preventing communism and securing the Israeli security. The US achieved these goals at the expense of Iranians’ freedom of speech, right to vote and right to do politics. In this way, the CIA-sponsored 1953 coup d’état brought a qualitative change in Iran-US relations. In the new phase of Iran-US relations, Iranians remained strong anti-American and this was manifested in ousting the US-backed Shah and storming the US Embassy in Tehran in 1979 and finally in adopting anti-US foreign policy in the post-revolutionary government (as will be elaborated in the following chapters). Darioush Bayandor in his *Iran and the CIA: The Fall of Mosaddeq Revisited* has concluded: “The manifest hostility of the Islamic regime under Ayatollah Khomeini towards the United States was traced back and blamed on the American cabal in August 1953.”<sup>68</sup>

**Thirdly**, the final legacy of the CIA-assisted 1953 coup d’état was that it gave birth to long-term strong and visceral animosity of the Iranians toward the US. After 1953 coup d’état, Iranians generally view the Americans with distrust and the total damage in Iran-US relations was the clear and decisive effect on the Iranian public mind—the growth of anti-Americanism to which Barry Rubin dubbed “unpopularity” of the US. This anti-Americanism is still one of the deciding factors in the Iran-US relations. Historically, the US had committed a fatal mistake by removing

Iran's rightful Prime Minister at a time when the nationalism in Iran was in full vigour. Mosaddeq's biographer Farhad Diba has put: "The 1953 coup in Iran and the 1956 Suez War remain as historical evidence of the West's opposition to Middle East nationalism."<sup>69</sup> Following the 1953 coup the Iranian nationalism turned to virulent anti-Americanism. Recently published (2014) in her book entitled *Hard Choices* former Secretary of State Hillary Clinton has referred to the 1953 coup d'état as "a classic Cold War move for which many Iranians never forgave America."<sup>70</sup>

### Conclusion

There are some great landmarks in the history of Iran-US relations. The US-sponsored 1953 coup d'état was such a landmark. Since 1945 Iranians generally viewed the US as a key ally in helping it to overcome negative interference in its political and economic independence from the Soviet Union and Great Britain. However, this Iranian perception drastically changed when the US intervened negatively in Iranian politics in 1953. At the same time, the 1953 coup d'état fundamentally changed the general character of Iran-US relations and the 1953 coup d'état is still affecting Iran-US relations even after sixty plus years of eventful and complex history of Iran-US relations because the CIA-led 1953 coup d'état defined the US as the enemy in the minds of the Iranians forever. This US intervention eventually gave birth to strong Iranian resentment against US which increased over time when US unconditionally supported the repressive regime the Shah and the resentment eventually translated into the uprising against the US-backed Shah and later on with success of the 1979 Islamic Revolution the taking of US Embassy in Tehran and holding of 52 Americans as hostages for more than 14 months. Given this backdrop, Mark J. Gasiorowski has correctly observed that the US role in the coup and the subsequent assistance in the establishment and consolidation of the Shah's dictatorship were decisive for the future of Iran-US relations.<sup>71</sup>

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## **Chapter 3**

### **Iran-US Relations: 1953-1979**

#### **Introduction**

As shown in the previous chapters that Iran's geo-strategic importance and economic value constantly increased since 1945 and by 1953 they became so greater and vital for the US foreign policy that the US government had to interfere blatantly and illegally in Iranian politics in 1953 when the CIA orchestrated a coup d'état and removed Iran's nationalist, popular and democratically elected Prime Minister Dr. Mohammad Mosaddeq. Following the 1953 coup d'état a new vista of close bilateral relations between Iran and the US developed on the state-to-state basis and evolved through the 1970s at political, economic, military and cultural levels. However, close bilateral Iran-US relationship was not without strains. Underneath of state-to-state close relations there remained major and mental distance due to anti-American sentiment in Iran for the US involvement in the 1953 coup d'état while state-to-state close relations lost significant level of their previous intimacy. Thus, politically, during the 1953-1979 period, the Iran-US relationship evolved through many ways. Given the multi-dimensions of Iran-US relations during the 1953-1979 period, it is necessary to provide an insightful and appropriate analysis of relationship between the two countries. This chapter is fully dedicated to that end. For our own convenience, Iran-US political relations of this period are examined in five distinctive sections. They are:

**Section I- Iran-US Client-Patron<sup>1</sup> Relations: 1953-1968**

**Section II- The Decade of Iran-US Partnership and Special Relations: 1969-1979**

**Section III- Iran-US Military Relations: 1953-1979**

**Section IV- Iran-US Strained Relations (1954-1979): The Paradox of Close Relations**

**Section V- Anti-Americanism, the Islamic Revolution of 1979 and the End of Iran-US Intimate Relations**

## **Section I**

### **Iran-US Client-Patron Relations: 1953-1968**

For all intents and purposes, the 1953 coup established the US in Iran as the prime patron and protector of the Pahlavi regime while the Shah of Iran became heavily dependent on the US for his own security and survival and for overall security of his country. Iran's socio-economic development and foreign policy objectives became closely tied to the interests of the US. For its part, the US came to support the Shah and his country viewing both Iran and the Shah essential for securing its interests in the region. This interdependence culminated in the development of client-patron relationship between Iran and the US.

The Shah, who had fled to Italy only few days ago, had now been accompanied by the head of the CIA John Allen Dulles, returned to Tehran on August 22, 1953, on a US military plane. The US-sponsored 1953 coup d'état in Iran thus restored the pro-Western Shah to the throne with his loyal and pro-US government of Prime Minister Major General Fazlullah Zahedi. Upon return home, in his first meeting with US Ambassador Loy Henderson, the Shah expressed his deep gratitude for the strong US support for him, specifically during the turbulent and difficult month of August in 1953. Henderson conveyed a message from the US President Eisenhower that congratulated the Shah for his strength, which had kept Iran's sovereignty intact with a pro-Western attitude. In reply, the Shah thanked Henderson and asked him to tell the President that Iran was now safe due to US support, the loyalty of the Iranian people, and God's help. The Shah also expressed his gratitude to Kermit Roosevelt—the architect of the 1953 coup d'état—in the late summer of 1953 and said: "I owe my throne to God, my people, my army—and to you!"<sup>2</sup> In this way, the post-coup leadership of Iran appeared completely loyal to the US as well as the safeguard for US interests in Iran and the region.

In fact, the course of Iran's history after the CIA-led 1953 coup d'état through which the US pushed the Shah into power was marked by two central trends. The first was the transformation of the Shah from an uncertain figurehead into a dictatorial monarch, and the second was increasing US involvement in Iranian affairs as an American raj. Politically, this can be understood as the emergence of US as the hegemonic power in Iran following the 1953 coup which had a dominant presence in the country. For many years Iran relied increasingly on US assistance and remained dependent on US economic aid for internal development, and on military aid for internal and external security matters. In this way, Iran was incorporated as a subordinate member of the US alliance system receiving financial and military support while Iran's Shah became a puppet of US foreign policy. In more dynamic sense, for the next 26 plus years following the 1953 coup, the Shah had been used as promoter of American ends in the

region in general and in Iran in particular. Thus initially, the 1953 coup d'état paved the way for Iran to become an American client state under the repressive rule of the Shah commonly known as 'reign of terror', which continued for over a decade. Amin Saikal in his first book entitled *The Rise and Fall of the Shah: Iran from Autocracy to Religious rule* (first published in 1980) has noted that in its relationship with Tehran, Washington acted as a "Patron power" in upholding and securing the Shah's regime and influencing the direction and substance of its policies in line with Western regional and international interests. While in his another book entitled *Islam and the West: Conflict or Cooperation?* (2003) Saikal has stated that after 1953 coup Iran became "a key client to protect American interests in the region" and "the Shah acted as a bridgehead for US influence in Iran and the wider region from 1953".<sup>3</sup> For some practical reasons the 1953 coup d'état unfolded the client-patron relationship between Iran and the US within the framework of close bilateral relations.<sup>4</sup>

Firstly, the internal security of the Shah's regime was an important factor in the development of client-patron relationship between Tehran and Washington. Iran's Shah owed much for his throne to the US in 1953. In a sense, the Shah was the creation of the US. Once out of Iran from August 16, 1953, the Shah never had thought of returning to his country. It was the US intelligence CIA that made it possible. As the Shah returned to power with direct US help he showed his intense loyalty to the US. He naturally opted for relying on the US to consolidate his rule at home. Meanwhile, his loyal Prime Minister Fazlullah Zahedi recognized his government's dependence upon the US and was committed to ties with the West, especially with US. Thus Iran became closely aligned with the US.<sup>5</sup> However, the Shah felt intensely threatened at home by strong pro-Mosaddeq nationalist and pro-Moscow communist party Tudeh leftist opposition. Although the 1953 coup d'état was celebrated annually as a "national uprising" and the Shah often referred to as an "elected monarch," he grew steadily and increasingly wary, distrustful, and dismissive of the oppositional forces of National Front, Tudeh and clerics (whom he considered as enemies), general Iranians and of public opinion because his very position was contrary to the Iranian desires and aspirations and henceforth, questionable. To defuse his internal security threats, the Shah castigated his clerical opponents as "black reactionaries" who along with "red reactionaries" namely the left, were opposed to reform and therefore, they had to be controlled or eliminated. This attitude of the Shah towards the opposition was largely responsible for the development of client-patron relations because after 1953 the Shah's regime became heavily dependent on the US for its immediate survival and continuity in face of strong opposition at home. This initial dependence implied largely a narrowing of the regime's policy options to a pro-Western, mainly pro-American, stance in both its domestic and foreign policy behavior. The regime, therefore, committed itself to a formal alliance with the West, and tied the country's internal security and socio-economic

development to the interests of the US which constituted the basis for the development of Iran's dependent relations on the US.

**Secondly**, on the external front, after his reinstatement, the Shah had real and perceived regional threats emanating from two main sources: the Soviet Union and radical Arab nationalists. In his view of such threats, the Shah became and remained dependent entirely on the US in matters of foreign policy and the economic development of the country. Thus the 1953 coup turned the US from a third force to a protective umbrella for the Shah's regime. For his part, in response to the Arab radicals' anti-monarchy propaganda the Shah promoted the policy of Positive Nationalism of allying Iran with a superpower—the US (as opposed to Mosaddeq's Negative Equilibrium of not allying Iran with any power) and sought its help. The US help was readily available. The Shah urgently felt that for pressing internal security and external threats, for the continuation of his rule in Iran and finally for conducting a foreign policy independent of European powers, Iran “had no choice but to ally itself with those states whose interest dictated the maintenance of her sovereignty, even if this entailed the acceptance of political and military commitments.”<sup>6</sup>

**Thirdly**, following the 1953 coup d'état and because of the Shah's grateful gestures, the US got Iran by its side to secure its three important interests in the Middle East: oil of the region, the newly-founded Jewish state of Israel<sup>7</sup> and checking of Soviet expansion in the area. For these matters, the US heavily involved itself in Iranian affairs and supported the country and its repressive Shah all the way up to the 1960s as a beneficiary patron. The US which had been working to complete a chain of anti-Soviet defense pacts in the Middle East region before the 1953 coup d'état became dependent on Iran after the coup and felt the need to align the country with the West. Iran was particularly considered an important security belt to check the spread of communism and minimize the influence of Moscow in the region given the fact that Iran has a 1250 miles joint border with the Soviet Union including the Caspian Sea. This was demonstrated when in January 1954, the State Department, the CIA, and the National Security Council produced reports regarding US policy toward Iran viewing the country as geographically critical to US interests in the region. The reports finally emphasized the maintenance of Iran's sovereignty and the need to align it with the West and for this the reports focused on strengthening Iran's army with US aid and continuing US support for the Shah and Iran.<sup>8</sup> The subsequent US policy toward Iran adopted on the basis of such reports that led the US to play the role of a patron in Iran-US relations up to 1968.

### **The Course, Nature and Evolution of the Client-Patron Relations**

As the CIA-led 1953 coup d'état set the stage for the devolvement of client-patron relations between Iran and the US, the Shah, with US overt support chose to rule by the bayonet rather

than by the ballot and it was the US aid that enabled the Shah to survive against all odds: internal and external as specified above. On the other hand, Washington sought long-term US involvement in the Iranian oil industry, the economy, the armed forces and socio-cultural reforms of Iran. Increasing US involvement in these areas, plus continuous feeling of insecurity on the part of the Shah's regime lay behind the rapid development of the internal mechanisms of Iran's dependence on the US. As time progressed, Iran more and more was brought into the fold of US influence and the security of the Shah's regime and the state as a whole were regarded as vital to Washington. At the same time, Iran's foreign policy was placed next to the US foreign policy interests. In this way, the client-patron relationship began to take a concrete shape between Iran and US. However, all the points as just mentioned clearly show that the client-patron relationship was a two-way gesture: Iran's dependence on the US for the survival of its ruler from the internal and external threats and US need and to some degree, its dependence on Iran and on the Shah for oil, Israel and the checking of communist expansion. Following is a brief pen-picture of the client-patron relationship that evolved between Iran and the US during the 1953-1968 period.

**(a) The US Assistance in the Consolidation of the Shah's Regime**

Following the 1953-CIA coup d'état, the Shah, with direct US support imposed full control on Iranian politics, economy and culture. Conversely, for its interests as just stated, the US decisively moved to support the Shah's regime economically as well as militarily in the initial critical period following the coup and prolong it by tolerating many misdeeds of the Shah. Economically, the patron announced an initial emergency grant as early as September 3, 1953, while Point Four aid continued at a level of \$23 million for the remainder of the year. Official US figures for the 1953-1957 period show that Iran received a total of \$366.8 million in economic aid which contributed a lot to the stabilization of the Shah's regime in the post-coup period. The US also provided funds for the two major pillars of the Shah's support: the army and the bureaucracy.<sup>9</sup> Besides, the US sent military advisors to train Iranian army. In 1957, the US intelligence CIA and FBI and Israeli intelligence MOSSAD assisted in the creation of the omni-present-type intelligence—SAVAK (*Sazeman-e Ittelaat va Amniyat-va Kishvar*, an acronym for Persian equivalent of the National Intelligence and Security Organization of the Country, to consolidate the rule of its client in the post-1953 coup era. Also known as the "Iranian equivalent of the Gestapo" (Secret State Police of Nazi Germany), the SAVAK was especially notorious for its brutal persecutions and torturing of prisoners spread its venomous tentacles all over the world including the US to punish Iranian dissidents. At home, the SAVAK crushed regularly all politically and religiously based resistance to Shah's rule and thus silenced all opposition to the Shah's regime.

The US also encouraged and to some extent pressured the Shah to broaden his base through controlled initiatives designed to foster political pluralism. As a result, the Shah introduced a two-party political system in Iran and these “political parties were designed to function as safety valves, not political institutions”<sup>10</sup> which hugely pleased the US. In the context of growing client-patron relationship when oppositional demonstrations became a regular feature in Iranian politics since early June of 1963, the FBI-CIA-MOSSAD trained Shah’s SAVAK and military took responsibility to control Iran’s political situation by torturing, killing, imprisoning and even banishing opposition leaders. For example, when the Shah’s package of reforms in the name of the White Revolution (*Enqelab-e Sefid*)<sup>11</sup> invited angry reactions from Imam Ayatullah Ruhollah Musavi Khomeini and his followers there was a serious uprising against the Shah. Well aware of US support, the Shah did not hesitate to call out the commandos and special forces as well as the regular army, all trained by US advisers and equipped with American weapons, to crush the demonstrations. The forces, commanded by ferocious General Gholam Ali Oveisi, were given “shoot to kill” orders which caused 10,000 to 15,000 death<sup>12</sup> and for the bloodbath Oveisi won the notorious epithet—“the Butcher of Tehran”. As the Shah suppressed the uprising bloodily, praise from patron poured in. For example, on June 20, 1963, President Kennedy in a personal message commended the Shah for ‘surmounting the disturbances’ and encouraged him to improve the economic situation to ensure the success of his reforms. He and the State Department viewed the uprising as an isolated event, caused by a few radicals.<sup>13</sup> The necessity of such Washington’s support to continue his reforms as well as his rule made the Shah more dependent on the US making the client-patron relations more meaningful and more strengthened.

**(b) Official Visits between Tehran and Washington**

The client-patron relationship was also deepened by the highest-ranking US and Iranian official visits between Tehran and Washington. Only a few months after the US-sponsored 1953 coup, the US vice President Richard Nixon traveled to Iran on December 9, 1953 for an important official visit which James A. Bill views as “a strong sign of American support for the shah’s regime.”<sup>14</sup> Nixon had meetings with Prime Minister Zahedi and the Shah. Nixon assured the Shah for long-term US assistance. In January 1958, on the eve of the formation of the United Arab Republic (UAR), a non-Western Arab union of Egypt and Syria, Secretary of State John Foster Dulles visited Iran, and met with the Shah and Iran’s Prime Minister. Dulles’ visit was especially significant because in his 1953 tour of the region he had indicated his disapproval of the Mosaddeq government by pointedly omitting Tehran from his itinerary. Therefore, given the nature of Dulles’ visit it can be concluded that the post-coup visit was aimed at convincing the Iranian leaders that the patron was with its client—Iran (or the Shah). Such US demonstrations continued and significantly increased as time proceeded. For example,

following the July 1958 Iraqi Revolution when the secretaries of Treasury and Defense visited Iran in October 1958 with further assurances of military aid to Iran, while President Eisenhower paid a state visit to Iran on December 14, 1959, amidst the West's increasing strategic and financial involvement in the country and assured the Shah that US was in full support of Iran even in case of any foreign aggression.

During the Kennedy administration when riots engulfed Tehran in January and February of 1961 and gave rise a real fear in the US that an alliance between civilian and military dissidents might bring down its client—the Shah, it sent Averall Harriman as Special Presidential Envoy to Iran in March 1961 to assure Washington's client that the US was beside him since he was America's only hope of stability in the region. Therefore, the Shah of Iran should be supported all the way, dealt with frankly and not to be treated as an unwanted step-child. As time progressed, since early 1962 there developed an alliance between the Shah and US Embassy in Tehran. The alliance was such level that some used to call US Ambassador Julius C. Holmes (1961-1965) as the Shah's Ambassador.<sup>15</sup> Soon Tehran became a popular place for US officials to visit and also for the reason that they could see the situation there at first hand and weigh in on what needed to be done for Washington's client.<sup>16</sup> The official visits from Iranian side also reported to consolidate client-patron relationship. In this regard, the Shah himself took the lead and paid regular visits to the US. During his visits the Shah met with US Presidents and numerous other influential US officials and individuals with a view to cementing Tehran-Washington relations. During his visit to US in April 1961, President Kennedy assured the Shah that the administration believed Iran would collapse without his leadership. By stating this, the President wanted the Shah to know that he had the support of his administration.<sup>17</sup>

**(c) Iran Joined pro-US Camp—the Baghdad Pact<sup>18</sup> (later CENTO), Supported the Eisenhower Doctrine**

Whereas the Shah quarantined his internal threats with the CIA-FBI-MOSSAD-trained SAVAK as mentioned above, in response to the external threats he took comfort in joining the pro-US camp namely the Baghdad Pact on October 12, 1955. The US was pleased to see its client-state—Iran, in the Middle Eastern security arrangement—the Baghdad Pact. Fundamentally, keeping Iran as an ally of the West and forming a security chain with the country was one of the real motives of the CIA-orchestrated 1953 coup d'état as reviewed in the previous chapter. Once the 1953 coup took place, measures were taken by the US to align Iran so that it openly identified with the West. To that end, the US first provided much-needed financial aid to Iran and then it encouraged the country to join the Baghdad Pact.<sup>19</sup> The policy-elite in Washington wanted Iran as a central member of the Baghdad Pact primarily for strategic and military reasons having to do with the Soviet Union. The US assessment of Iran's importance rested largely on four considerations. First, Iran was the only country in the Middle

East besides Turkey and Afghanistan that had a common frontier with the Soviet Union. Second, the northern tier concept could not materialize until Iran became a participant in the Baghdad Pact. Third, the most suitable defence line in the Middle East lay in Iran. Fourth, the availability of Iranian oil for the free world was very important for the US.<sup>20</sup> Finally, the Shah saw that joining the Baghdad Pact would bring three benefits for Iran: first, it would prove Iran's anti-Communist credentials, second, it would provide a chance to protect Iran from an outside attack, and third, Iran would obtain more US aid to establish a military commitment in order to gain US support and to increase the capabilities, status, and prestige of the armed forces. Later on in early January of 1957 when President Eisenhower announced that 'the existing vacuum in the Middle East must be filled by the US before it is filled by Russia' which later became known as the Eisenhower Doctrine, Iran also supported it and confirmed appreciation from its patron.

**(d) The Iran-US Bilateral Defense Pact**

Although Iran adhered to the Baghdad Pact and Eisenhower Doctrine, it had no military or defence commitment from the US. During a state visit to the US from June 30 to July 2 of 1958, the Shah met with President Eisenhower and requested for military aid arguing Iran's strategic location, Iran's close proximity to the Soviet Union and Iran as a member of the Baghdad Pact. Upon return home, the Shah alarmingly noticed Iraqi Revolution that took place on July 14, 1958, when Iraqi revolutionaries led by Abdul Karim Quasem toppled British-backed monarchy. The 1958 Iraqi Revolution gave rise to a sense of complete insecurity in the mind of the Shah. Together with the Iraqi Revolution, Nasser's brand of Arab nationalism and challenge of Soviet influence caused much tension for the Shah who requested the US for more military and economic aid to Iran and sought a more tangible US commitment to the security of the country and his regime. The US responded promptly and decisively. It concluded much-awaited bilateral agreement with Iran at Ankara on March 5, 1959. Under Article 1 of the treaty, Washington committed that: "In the case of aggression against Iran, the Government of the United States of America, in accordance with the Constitution of the United States of America, will take such appropriate action, including the use of armed forces, as may be mutually agreed upon and as is envisaged in the Joint Resolution to Promote Peace and Stability in the Middle East, in order to assist the Government of Iran at its request."<sup>21</sup> It must be emphasized here that the bilateral defense agreement that actually formalized a US commitment to Iran, ultimately tied the client with its patron by an unbreakable bondage. Thus the agreement removed the fear of the client since the patron guaranteed to defend Iran in case of communist aggression. Some analysts saw the treaty as the compensatory initiative of the US for not actually joining the Baghdad Pact, while others viewed that the 1959 bilateral pact, along with the flow of US military and economic grants to Iran unquestionably reflected US



interests in Iran. Therefore, since 1959 the US policy in Iran consisted of a holding operation based on a bilateral defense treaty, which aimed at maintaining the Shah in power and thereby keeping within the Western camp as a client in the region.<sup>22</sup>

**(e) The Client (the Shah) Initiated Reform Programmes as Prescribed by the Patron—the US**

Another means through which the client-patron relations between Iran and the US evolved was Iran's reforms programmes as prescribed by the patron—the US. On December 15, 1959, in a speech before the Majlis, US President Eisenhower encouraged the Iranian government to initiate socio-economic reforms for long-term stability of the country and the Shah's regime and hinted that it was not military strength alone that could help American client. Democrat candidate John Fitzgerald Kennedy's election victory in 1960 had a profound impact on overall Iran-US relations. Scholars are in agreement that while most of the focus of the Kennedy Administration on the Middle East rested on the Arab-Israeli conflict, one of the main areas of stability and strategic importance was Iran. Reportedly, the Kennedy administration hoped to keep Iran as a strong and stable ally of the US.<sup>23</sup> Therefore, the Kennedy administration from the very beginning stressed Iran's economic development, social change, and political reforms over conventional military assistance. In May 1961, the Shah appointed a US favoured Dr. Ali Amini as Prime Minister in response to patron's pressure which was seen another clear example of client-patron relations between the Shah and the US as stated above. During his fourteen-month tenure as Prime Minister, Ali Amini, with US instructions initiated many economic reforms (for instance, economic austerity measures, a visible campaign against corruption including the severance of the Shah's personal connection with the Pahlavi Foundation, the permission given to the National Front to resume public activities and the granting freedom of the press etc.) to please Iran's patron—the US. Since the client had to do what its patron desired, the patron found itself entangled more deeply than ever in Iranian affairs giving Iran-US relations a new dimension.

However, the Shah was at odds with his patron—the US— because he wanted reforms in Iran should be identified with him not with others. Against this background, the Shah terminated the premiership of Washington-prescribed reforming Prime Minister Ali Amini (who resigned on July 17, 1962 on the ground that the US economic aid was insufficient to carry out reform programmes) and initiated reforms in his name in the name of "White Revolution" in early January 1963. Policy makers in Washington quickly took this as proof that reform was occurring and they "portrayed the Shah as a relentless "modernizer" doing noble battle against the "fanatical" and reactionary" Muslim clergy".<sup>24</sup> Factually, it was the US that pressured the Shah to initiate the "White Revolution", or the "Revolution of the Shah and the People" as it also became known was widely seen as an American-inspired package of measures designed to

give his regime a liberal and progressive facade. Since the majority Iranians rejected the Shah's reforms calling them American reforms and dubbing the Shah as a 'foreign puppet', consequently, in the long run, the much-talked White Revolution did not bring real change in Iranian society. When the Iranians led by Ayatullah Imam Khomeini denounced the White Revolution and engaged violent demonstration on June 5, 1963 against the Shah, he, mindful of US support, promptly called in the troops to quell uprising. The troops suppressed the uprising brutally and after that the Shah got the patron by his side as mentioned above.

**(f) The Granting of Status of Forces Agreement (SOFA): A New Horizon in Client-Patron Relationship**

Washington continued to entangle in Iranian affairs in line with the policy established following the CIA-instigated 1953 coup d'état in Iran. This US entanglement in Iran was due to growing Iran-US close relations that initially developed on the basis of client-patron relationship between the two countries. Having got Iran as a client nation after that coup, the US Department of Defense had been pushing hard for having an agreement for some time from the early 1960s that would provide diplomatic immunities to the US military personnel in Iran. Informal discussions between the US Embassy in Tehran and Iran's Ministry of Foreign Affairs began early in 1962, and on March 19 of the year the US Embassy formally requested to the Iranian government that US military personnel, civilian employees of the Defense Department and their families be granted diplomatic immunity.<sup>25</sup> The Iranian government remained silent recognizing the explosive nature of the issue. But as pressure from the patron grew with time, the client reluctantly approved what came to be known in US as the Status of Forces Agreement (hereinafter SOFA) and in Iran as the "Capitulations Agreement" which was virtually unprecedented. On October 13, 1964, the Shah-picked Majlis approved SOFA that provided US military personnel stationed in Iran with full diplomatic immunity. Consequently, the SOFA gave the US exclusive and permanent jurisdiction over all its military and civilian employees of the Department of Defense and their dependents stationed in Iran and freed them from Iranian legal control. Reportedly, the friendly relationship between the Shah and President Lyndon Baines Johnson (1963-1968), and Johnson's offer of \$200 million credit loan (with 5% interests which was repayable over ten-year period) for the purchase of US military equipment were responsible for quick approval of the SOFA.

Without a dispute, the granting of SOFA strengthened client-patron relationship, and to some extent, added new dimension to the growing client-patron relationship although majority Iranians found it as one of the key sources of anti-Americanism (see section V). The US government expressed its satisfaction following the granting of SOFA and began insisting on the extension of the purview of the SOFA stating that US military missions were to be defined as "those United States military personnel or civilian employees of the Department of Defense

and their families forming part of their households who are stationed in Iran in accordance with agreements and arrangements between the two Governments relating to military advice and assistance.”<sup>26</sup> Iran like an obedient client state, agreed to broaden the scope of the SOFA’s area. When the Shah’s sole outspoken opponent Ayatullah Imam Khomeini harshly criticized the regime for granting SOFA, he was arrested in November 1964 and sent in to exile in Turkey (in October 1965 Khomeini moved to Iraq). With this last credible source of public opposition removed, the Shah tightened his grip over the state and society of Iran and this brought much satisfaction to his patron—the US.

### **Conclusion**

The most dynamic legacy of the 1953 coup d’état was that in supporting the monarchy, the US initiated a policy that culminated in the eventual locking in of US interests with the fate of the Shah. This actually initiated a process where Iran became the most important ally of the US in the Third World, leading to the establishment of the Iran-US client-patron relationship within the context of Iran-US close relations. One essential feature of client-patron relations between Iran and the US was that the Shah was seen as the embodiment of the Iranian nation while serving Washington’s interests. Therefore, the US was able to contain Soviet expansion in the area. The US also succeeded in ensuring oil supply and confirming the critical political and economic support of Iran for Israel just because of the close client-patron Iran-US relations. The client-patron relationship that developed between Iran and the US since 1953 also brought a number of benefits for Iran. Firstly, Iran was able to use the US connection as a security umbrella against the Soviet Union. Secondly, Iran was able to develop a strong army equipped with American modern and advanced weaponry. Thirdly, it was because of Iran-US close relations of the 1950s, Iran initiated nuclear programme with direct US help (see section IV of chapter 5). Fourthly, Iran benefitted economically by making agreements with Western oil companies. Fifthly, a rapprochement with other regional states (Arab and Israel who were US allies) became possible. Sixthly, the Shah blunted the secular and religious opposition to him and prolonged his rule, and eventually established a ‘reign of terror’ with the help of US-trained SAVAK. Finally, due to Iran’s adoption of pro-Western (American) foreign policy US emerged as the ultimate guarantor of Iran’s internal and external security as well as survival of the Shah’s regime. However, from early 1969 Iran transitioned from a client state into an emerging partner of the US also known as super-client, and developed a new type of relationship with the US which is known in history as Iran-US partnership or special relationship. The next section is the study of this type Iran-US relationship.

## Notes and References of Section I of Chapter 3

1. Since the policy-makers in Washington viewed that Iran's security and security of the Shah was inseparable, therefore, the term "client" is used to mean both the Shah and Iran in the present study interchangeably while the US is depicted as "patron". During the first decade and half since 1953, the Shah was a credible and loyal ally to the US. The Shah's legitimacy was suspect and his support was purchased and backed by the US and his profile was similar to client or puppet leaders elsewhere in the world propped up by the US.
2. Kermit Roosevelt, *Countercoup: ...*, *op. cit.*, p. ix; R.W.B., 'Dr. Musaddiq and After', *op. cit.*, p. 426.
3. Amin Saikal, *Islam and the West: Conflict or Cooperation?*, *op. cit.*, pp. 54, 57, 69.
4. For a detailed discussion on client-patron relationship between Iran and the US see: Helmut Richards, 'America's Shah Shahanshah's Iran', *Middle East Research and Information Project (MERIP) Reports*, No. 40, September, 1975, pp. 3-26; Amin Saikal, *The Rise and Fall of the Shah: ...*, *op. cit.*, pp. 46-70.
5. Peter Avery et. al., *The Cambridge History of Iran*, Vol. 7, *op. cit.*, p. 266; Raymond Hinnebusch, *The International Politics of the Middle East*, Manchester University Press, UK, 2003, p. 188.
6. Shahram Chubin and Sephr Zabih, *The Foreign Relations of Iran: A Developing State in Zone of Great-Power Conflict*, University of California Press, USA, 1974, p. 4.
7. The Shah's recognition of Israel was announced on July 24, 1960. While since 1950 Iran recognized Israel as a defacto state.
8. Kristen Blake, *op. cit.*, pp. 98, 108, 116, 142.
9. Rouhollah K. Ramazani, *Iran's Foreign Policy, 1941-1973: ...*, *op. cit.*, p. 262; Helmut Richards, 'America's Shah Shahanshah's Iran', *op. cit.*, p. 7.
10. For the Shah's political parties, see: Roby C. Barret, *op. cit.*, p. 159; Amin Saikal, *The Rise and Fall of the Shah: ...*, *op. cit.*, p. 63; Kristen Blake, *op. cit.*, pp. 110-114.
11. The Shah had chosen the term white to signify the fact that this was a progressive movement where no blood would be shed in carrying out these reforms.
12. However, the government claimed 100 had been killed while 200 left injured. See: Saiyid Athar Abbas Rizvi, *Iran: ...*, *op. cit.* p. 262; Dilip Hiro, *Iran under the Ayatollahs*, Routledge & Kegan Paul, London, 1985, p. 47.
13. April R. Summitt, 'For a White Revolution: John F. Kennedy and the Shah of Iran', *Middle East Journal*, Vol. 58, No. 4, Autumn, 2004, p. 571.
14. James A. Bill, *The Eagle and the Lion: ...*, *op. cit.*, p. 116.
15. Roby C. Barrett, *The Greater Middle East and the Cold War: ...*, p. 231.
16. For details: James A. Bill, *The Eagle and the Lion: ...*, *op. cit.*, pp. 139-169.
17. Roby C. Barrett, *The Greater Middle East and the Cold War: ...*, p. 235.
18. Initially Washington and London concentrated on the formation of a Middle East Defense Organization since 1953, but had to abandon the idea owing to Egypt's opposition. Then the two parties moved to form the so-called Northern Tier, i.e., the chain of countries between Turkey and Pakistan, which, more conscious of the Soviet danger, entered into bilateral or multilateral military assistance agreements which eventually evolved into the Baghdad Pact in 1955. After the Iraqi revolution in 1958, Iraq left the Pact on March 24, 1959 and since August 19, 1959 the Baghdad Pact became known as the Central Treaty Organization (CENTO).
19. Kristen Blake, *op. cit.*, pp. 97-98.
20. Behcet Kemal Yesilbursa, *The Baghdad Pact: Anglo-American defence policies in the Middle East, 1950-1959*, Frank Cass, London, 2005, p. 113.
21. Quoted in James A. Bill, *The Eagle and the Lion: ...*, *op. cit.*, p., 119.
22. Shahram Chubin and Sephr Zabih, *The Foreign Relations of Iran: ...*, *op. cit.*, p. 99; Peter Avery, *Modern Iran*, *op. cit.*, p. 488; John P. Miglietta, *op. cit.*, p. 48.
23. April R. Summitt, 'For a White Revolution: ...', *op. cit.*, p. 562.
24. Ali-Reza Nobari, *Iran Erupts*, Iran-America Documentation Group, Stanford University, USA, 1978, p. 104.
25. Richard Pfau, 'The Legal Status of American Forces in Iran', *Middle East Journal*, Vol. 28, No. 2, Spring, 1974, p. 147.
26. James A. Bill, *The Eagle and the Lion: ...*, *op. cit.*, p. 158.

## **Section II**

### **The Decade of Iran-US Partnership and Special Relations: 1969-1979**

#### **Introduction**

Since the end of the 1960s the US needed Iran more than Iran needed the US. This US need for Iranian support resulted in the growth of special-partnership-special relations between the two countries. Reportedly, during the client-patron relationship between Iran and the US, the client needed the patron most for its survival, although essentially they were interdependent for patron saw the client was serving its vital interests in the region. Over time and in a changed regional and international perspective, this interdependence increased considerably and Iran-US relations witnessed a new course of their history where the patron became more dependent on the client. Because the patron—US—needed the client Iran or Shah most instead of the client needed the patron most and this was indeed a unique phase of history of Iran-US relations. In fact, this was the final stage of client-patron relations between Iran and the US, a stage where Iran appeared as a super-client and formed partnership relationship with its now former patron—the US.

There is no doubt that during the 1969-1979 period, US imperial interests and Shah's authoritarian monarchy became intermingled and resulted in effective affinities between Iran and the US. Historically, the origins of the Iran-US partnership and special relations traced back to the later part of the Johnson administration. Shahram Chubin and Sephr Zabih, and Barry Rubin have pointedly characterized Iran's relations with US since 1968 as one of equality and harmony of interests and strategic requirements moved Washington's objectives for Iran and its neighborhood closer and closer to those of the Shah.<sup>1</sup> R. K. Ramazani—widely known as the dean of Iran's foreign policy expert—has observed that Iran's alignment with the US was intensified beginning in 1968.<sup>2</sup> Although President Lyndon Baines Johnson had been wary of the Shah's ambition for Iranian primacy in the Persian Gulf, the power relationship between Iran and the US gradually changed to Iran's advantage because of friendly relations between the Shah and Johnson. Eventually this evolved into special and partnership relations between Tehran and Washington during the Nixon administration (1969-1974) and continued to develop through the Ford (1974-1977) and early Carter (1977-1980) administrations.

This section critically looks into the factors involved in the development of Iran-US partnership and special relationship, then sheds light on the evolution of this type of relationship from 1969-1979 and finally concludes with a note on results of this relationship. A thorough examination will help us that a number of issues regional and international contributed to the development of partnership and special relationship between Iran and the US.

**(i) Communism, Arab Nationalism and Nasserism<sup>3</sup>**

Since Soviet expansionism and communism, Arab nationalism of Iraq from 1958, and waves of Nasserism from 1956 were posing serious threats to both Iranian and US interests, they both regarded these forces as their common enemies. Thus, Tehran and Washington shared a number of common goals including the checking of Communism, Arab radicalism and nationalism, and Nasserism. The Shah's particular fear in this regard was that Nasser's influence would expand in the Persian Gulf to counter Iran's increasing relations with Israel and the US.<sup>4</sup> Besides, the Shah's external threats of Soviet communism and Arab radicalism in an era of Nasserism and the Arab Cold War<sup>5</sup> (1957-1967) between Egypt and Saudi Arabia, led him to find an ardent and trusted ally in his patron—the US which led them to forge special-partnership relations.

**(ii) Iran's Pro-US Oil Policy**

Iran's pro-US oil policy also influenced the US to forge a partnership and special relationship with Iran. Iran's oil resources were strategically and economically life line to the West. Therefore, the most important considerations for the US in its posture towards Iran and developing special and partnership relations with the country was the latter's oil resource and its pro-US oil policy which continued at least up to the early 1970s. The significance of Iran's oil increased throughout the 1970s, particularly in the wake of Arab oil embargo in 1973. Iran's oil became more important to the US specifically given the chance that because of US support to Israel Arab oil might stop flowing. In fact, during the 1973 Arab-Israeli War when the Organization of Arab Petroleum Exporting Countries (hereinafter OAPEC) used oil as a political weapon while Shah's Iran maintained distance from such Arab oil politics, it further increased Shah's weight in US calculations.<sup>6</sup> Iran was then the sole supplier of oil from the Persian Gulf region to the US and its ally Israel. From Washington's perspective, it was during the 1973 Arab-Israeli War, the Iran-US special or partnership relations reached to a climax.

**(iii) Iran's Passive Attitude towards Israel**

From the very first day following the 1953 coup d'état, the US encouraged its client state Iran to maintain positive relations with its vital ally in the Middle East—Israel. Iran followed the instruction of its patron and forged an important political and economic relationship with Israel. It is said that Iran's Islamic culture and Shah's fear of the Arab reaction did not allow him to officially recognize the Jewish state, however, the Shah's regime recognized Israel as a *de facto* government since 1960. Washington took this very positively since Iran was the best means of liaison between Israel and the Arabs, while Israel considered Iran to be its only ally in the region. What is more, as a non-Arab Muslim country Iran had given Israel to open a large mission or its embassy in Tehran, the only Israeli Embassy in the Middle East through which Israel conducted its affairs with the same ease as any recognized delegation.<sup>7</sup> Iran also supplied oil to Israel even

during the Arab-Israeli wars of 1967 and 1973 even ignoring the Arab oil embargo. Given these realities, regionally and internationally the US needed Iran and Iran's Shah for supporting US policy in the Middle East in general and in Israel in particular. The need for Iran intensified US efforts to develop close, special and partnership relations with Iran.

**(iv) US Preoccupation with the Vietnam War**

Since the mid-1950s the US was deeply preoccupied in the Vietnam War (1955-1975) that was slowly, quietly and effectively draining the country economically. This US quagmire in Vietnam made the superpower a helpless giant. Iran's Shah supported US policy in Vietnam all the way for which the Johnson administration gratefully applauded the Shah. In the context of the ongoing unpopular Vietnam War, the US urgently felt the need for supporting the repressive dictators among its allies including the Shah of Iran. On the other hand, the Shah who had ambition for Iranian primacy in the Persian Gulf realized the US position. Since the British announcement of their withdrawal from the Persian Gulf and East of Suez in 1968, he showed his readiness to rid the Persian Gulf of foreign interference and to establish an independent national policy. With that purpose and given US preoccupation in Vietnam, Iran under the Shah pursued a policy of the development of an equal partnership with the US.<sup>8</sup>

**(v) The Johnson Administration (1963-1968) Paved the Way for the Development of Iran-US special relations**

There is no denying that President Kennedy's assassination in November 1963 proved important for the development of Iran-US special relations. The death of President Kennedy caused the sudden evaporation of US pressure on Iran. While there was some friction with Kennedy administration over the issue of reform programme, Iran's relations with the US under the Johnson administration were much more amicable due to Johnson's warm and cordial relations with the Shah. Shah's biographer has put: "His [Shah's] relations with the United States had qualitatively improved after the presidency passed from Kennedy to Johnson and promised to become even better under Nixon."<sup>9</sup> President Johnson considered himself a great friend of the Shah and tried to avoid telling his Iranian friend how to run his country. In fact, under President Johnson Washington was confident that Iran's commitment to the West and its dependence on the US had grown deep and strong enough to ensure the continuation of its special relationship with the West.

**(vi) The Nixon Administration (1969-1974) Gives the Real Push**

The above-mentioned facts help one to conclude that by the late 1960s Iran transitioned from a client state into an emerging partner of the US in the Middle East, and it was fully prepared to play the partnership role with its now former patron—the US. This partnership role of Iran was formally recognized by the Nixon administration. Great Britain who had, for 200 years, been

responsible for the security of the Persian Gulf decided to withdraw its military forces east of Suez Canal in 1968. This created a vacuum in the Gulf's security, one that the US did not want to fill directly itself because of its preoccupation in Vietnam as stated above, nor did it want it hand over to the Soviet Union. Under the circumstance, the Nixon administration generally viewed Iranian and US interests as conterminous. This position of US led the Nixon administration to depend on the Shah—a long-time ally of US. Basically, President Nixon and the Shah were staunchly anti-communist. Moreover, personal relations between them were excellent (see Appendix). Given such anti-communist credentials and personal friendship, they both maintained their special relations all the way which resulted in the growth and development of Iran-US partnership and special relations.

**(vii) The Role of US Mass Media and the Shah's Other Means**

The US mass media for example, *Time*, *Newsweek*, *Life*, *The New York Times*, *The Washington Post* also played a big role in the growth and evolution of partnership and special relations between Iran and the US. These media outlets were seen busy regularly to elicit more favorable coverage of the Shah's position in Iran. Most influential journalists of those newspapers supported the Shah for the reasons that they believed in what the Shah was doing at home; they were impressed by the representatives of his government; they strongly agreed with his policies supporting Israel and opposing the Soviet Union; and they ultimately considered him a staunch, stable friend of the US. True, occasional critical pieces appeared on their op-ed pages, but these were clearly exceptions. Many members of the mass media and a host of public relations efforts (of course paid by the Shah previously, for example, The New York advertizing agency of Ruder & Finn received \$507,000 contract to highlight or promote Iranian image under the Shah) along with certain influential scholars promoted Shah's image as a progressive and under him Iran and then provided the intellectual justification for US close relationship with Shah's Iran.<sup>10</sup>

The Shah also used his powerful formal and informal connections in Washington to strengthen Iran-US partnership and special relations. He generally sent accomplished public relations men as ambassadors to the US for that purpose. With a view to developing special relations between Tehran and Washington, the Shah's government consciously sought to establish relationships with members of the Congress. Over the years, several hundred senators and representatives either visited Iran or were invited to social functions sponsored by high-ranking Iranian officials in Washington. The Shah also used to pour Iranian money to buy American support. This was evident when in 1976 the Shah reportedly told Iran's representative to the UN that Iran's Ambassador in Washington Ardeshir Zahedi "has all the American senators in his pocket."<sup>11</sup> According to an analyst, twenty-eight Americans who were unconditional Pahlavi admirers and extremely effective in promoting over-all Iran-US ties, particularly the Iran-US partnership and special relations.<sup>12</sup>



## **The Evolution of the Iran-US Partnership and Special Relations**

### **(a) The Nixon Administration (1969-1974)**

There is little doubt that Nixon presidency was the high-water mark of Iran's partnership and special relationship with the US. President Richard Nixon and his foreign policy adviser, Henry Kissinger,<sup>13</sup> had created a unique and unprecedented relationship with the Shah. Consequently, the Iran-US partnership and special relationship made its first real start during the Nixon administration and developed through the Nixon Doctrine.<sup>14</sup> In the Persian Gulf, the Nixon Doctrine evolved into the "twin pillars" strategy.<sup>15</sup> It meant the US relying on two local military and economic powers: Iran and Saudi Arabia in place of US forces in the region. These two regional powers as "twin pillars" were considered as more of a stabilizing influence due to its financial resources and both was considered to work together in partnership to serve US interests in the region. In practice when the Nixon Doctrine's "twin pillars" strategy was put into action, the US government tilted toward Iran for developing partnership relations for two reasons. First, Iran was then the most capable in terms of military strength and willing state to maintain security in the area in the wake of the British departure and it was welcomed by the US not simply because it was a favoured ally of Washington, but largely because at the time Saudi Arabia was neither willing nor able to shoulder such a burden of responsibility which required military strength.<sup>16</sup> Second, Iran had adopted a pro-Israeli policy while Saudi King Faisal's commitment to the Arab struggle against Israel<sup>17</sup> severely limited Saudi Arabia's ability to play any leadership role under the Nixon Doctrine.

Most policy-makers in the Nixon administration "viewed the Shah as a loyal ally with shared world view as evidenced by the Shah's foreign policies, which included: opposition to Nasser and other radical Arab regimes; support for Israel; opposition to Communism and the Soviet Union; and alliances with conservative Gulf monarchies."<sup>18</sup> In this context, in February 1970, President Nixon wrote to the Shah to tell him that he shared the Shah's view that Iran should play an important role in the Nixon Doctrine.<sup>19</sup> The Shah quickly made the most of the Nixon Doctrine and advanced Iran's interests and role in the international politics. This won for him a winning concession from Washington that other US allies dared not dream of. As expected, the British withdrawal from the Persian Gulf in 1971 created a power vacuum in the region, Iran quickly moved to fill the British role as Gulf protector and guarantor of the Gulf monarchical regimes. Iran's bid to shoulder the task abandoned by Britain was readily approved by the US, when on March 2, 1971 a State Department spokesman declared that the US had no intention of seeking to replace the British presence. He also declared that the US was ready to increase military aid to the Gulf States if "another power" sought to move in after the British withdrawal. This US stance overtly promoted Iran to assume the policeman or partnership role in the Persian

Gulf. Thus, the US approval of Iran to replace the British in the region evidently conferred upon the country the status of a regional power.<sup>20</sup>

Audaciously enough, at about the same time, the Shah took opportunities to neutralize the presence of US forces in several bases in Gulf states and Gulf waters which strained Iran-US relations a lot (see section IV). For example, when after Bahrain won independence in 1971 from Great Britain, the US moved to establish its naval base facilities at Jufayr in the country, the Shah opposed any permanent US military base in the Gulf and registered his objection to the US Naval base in Bahrain arguing that a US base in the area would only encourage Soviet countermeasures through Iraq and this would result in superpower rivalry. The Shah reiterated his opposition when on December 23, 1971, the US renewed its right to use the naval base and increased its force from 200 to 600. These all demonstrate that by 1971 Iran was no more playing the role of a US client state; rather it was insisting on playing the role of a partner and since 1972, the Iran-US relations began to approach one of 'partnership between near equals'.<sup>21</sup> Later developments would better explain this fact.

On the morning of May 31, 1972, the Shah received President Richard Nixon and his National Security Adviser, Henry Kissinger at Tehran's Saadabad Palace in the foothills of the Alborz Mountains. They visited Iran on their way back home from a summit meeting in Moscow as well as in the context of growing Iraq-Soviet relations following the inking of a 15-year Treaty of Friendship and Co-operation on April 9, 1972. During the visit Nixon spent several hours with the Shah by discussing and spelling out the concept of the "twin pillar" strategy and the role he envisioned for Iran in the Persian Gulf security matters under the strategy. At the end of the talks President Nixon had apparently explained US expectations to the Shah with remarkable candor. Nixon looked across the table and said to the Shah, simply: "Protect me."<sup>22</sup> In his minute of the May 31 meeting, Kissinger recorded that Nixon, "asked the Shah to understand the purpose of American policy. 'Protect me,' he said. 'Don't look at détente as something that weakens you but as a way for the United States to gain influence.'<sup>23</sup>

As part of such relationship with the US, Iran did neither send troops to aid the Arabs once the fourth Arab-Israeli war broke out on October 6, 1973 (although the Iranian press gave full support to the Arab cause and urged the Shah and his military to do so), nor participate in the decision of the Arab oil producing states to use oil as a political weapon against the US and the countries friendly to Israel during the Arab-Israeli war of 1973. The Arab oil embargo continued for about six months from October 1973 to March 1974 causing huge economic damage to US but Iran came to rescue of its partner—the US by not joining the embargo, and providing oil. For that a grateful Richard Nixon described Iran's Shah as "our best friend". As the Iran-US partnership relations were gaining sound basis, the Nixon administration saw Iraq and the Gulf

through the Shah's eyes<sup>24</sup> and relied heavily on the Shah's judgment on local issues under the Nixon Doctrine. By the same token, Iran, the US and Israel viewed the Iraqi Kurds as a "uniquely useful tool" for weakening pro-Soviet Iraqi regime and for that they cooperated in providing covert support for the Kurds. The US government authorized a covert CIA operation to arm and to finance the Kurdish insurgency in Iraq in a bid to help Washington's regional partner—Iran—who was busy in securing ascendancy over Shatt al-Arab waterway. It is estimated that between 1972 and 1975 some \$16 million US aid channeled via Iran reached to the Kurds at the request of the Shah.<sup>25</sup>

**(b) The Ford Administration (1974-1977)**

Nixon's resignation in the wake of the Watergate scandal<sup>26</sup> made no difference to Iran-US special-partnership relations. Continuation of Henry Kissinger as Secretary of State under President Gerald Ford was one of the reasons for this. Therefore, the Ford administration also enjoyed and maintained partnership and special relationship with Iran. Richard Helms who was US Ambassador to Iran from 1973 to 1977 strongly believed that the Shah was good for the US and therefore, US interests were the Shah's interests, and vice versa. On February 18, 1975, the Shah and Henry Kissinger met in Zurich, Switzerland. In response to a request from Kissinger, the Shah agreed to provide US ally Israel with additional Iranian oil if the Israelis acceded to Kissinger's retreat plan from Egyptian oilfields in the Sinai. This is a proof that the Shah usually responded sympathetically to US diplomatic requests in return for Washington's unconditional support for him and also for the prevailing Iran-US partnership and special relationship.<sup>27</sup> Following this, in March 1975, US Under Secretary of State Alfred Atherton has described the bilateral Iran-US ties as 'a very special one'.<sup>28</sup> Despite rising public criticism of the Shah's regime for several reasons including his oil policy, human rights abuse, Shah's new attitude towards Israel and Palestinians, and Iran-Iraq rapprochement Iran-US relations continued to be special of course, outwardly while covertly Iran-US strained relations (analyzed in section IV) was taking concrete shape.

**(c) The Carter Administration (1977-1979)**

When President Jimmy Carter took office in January 1977, he inherited a balanced partnership and special relationship with Iran where Iran under the Shah had accepted the role of protecting US interests in the Persian Gulf while the US remained discontent with the Shah for a number of reasons including his oil policy, nuclear policy, Israeli policy and others as just noted and will be elaborated in section IV. Consequently, the Shah was cynical about the continuous US support for Iran under the Carter administration. Shah's fear increased since President Carter focused on the promotion of human rights in the international arena while the Shah himself was a violator of human rights of highest order in Iran for decades. Yet, special-partnership relations between Iran and the US continued under Carter Presidency because the Shah was still supporting Israel by

refusing PLO's request to open a Palestinian mission in Tehran. Additionally, Carter's foreign policy team of Secretary of State Cyrus Vance and National Security Adviser Zbigniew Brzezinski strongly advocated the continuation of existing special-partnership relations with Iran arguing that the Shah's policies directly benefited the US.<sup>29</sup> It is pertinent to state that overtly US special and close relationship with Iran continued, however, with the onset of the Islamic Revolution in late 1977 and early 1978 US support for the Shah became conditional.<sup>30</sup> Although like many Hossein Fardoust has claimed that in this way, special and cordial relations existed between Iran and the US until the Guadeloupe conference in December 1978, but my study suggests that this cordial and special relationship was not real, since by then the US adopted a hidden policy of abandonment of the Shah, however, Iranians in general believed that Shah's special and cordial relations continued with Carter until the last day of his departure from Iran on January 16, 1979.

### Conclusion

Historically, the decade 1969-1979 is considered as the partnership and special relationship between Iran and the US. Iran-US close and partnership-special relations during these years produced some geostrategic and other material benefits for both countries. Iran as a Third World country viewed its alliance with US since 1953 as a safeguard to external and internal threats. On the domestic front, the Shah's regime used "American partnership" or "special relationship," to escape from the realities of Iranian domestic disunity, of ideological divisions, and of basic structural flaws in the Iranian society.<sup>31</sup> On the external front, the Iran-US partnership and special relationship enhanced Iran's prestige and power in the region as well as in international politics. It was not only a strong relationship that Iran and US built, but both the countries enjoyed well and benefited much during these period of time from their bilateral special and partnership relationship. However, this type of special relationship did not last long because of Shah's policies regarding oil price, nuclear programme, alliance with Iraq, changed attitude towards Israel etc. which in effect turned Iran-US relationship into a strained one. As a result, although the Ford and Carter administrations allowed to continue the partnership and special relations with Iran, basically the crack became visible once the anti-Shah demonstrations began in Iran. However, before elaborating these Iran-US strained relations in a section, we turn to Iran-US military relations in the following section.

### Notes and References of Section II of Chapter 3

1. Shahram Chubin and Sephr Zabih, *The Foreign Relations of Iran: ...*, op., cit., p. 107; Barry Rubin, *Paved with Good Intentions: ...*, op., cit., p. 123.
2. Rouhollah K. Ramazani, *Iran's Foreign Policy, 1941-1973: ...*, op., cit., p. 311.
3. Nasserism is a socialist Arab nationalist political ideology based on the thinking of President Gamal Abd-al Nasser of Egypt (1952-1970).

4. John P. Miglietta, *op., cit.*, p. 59; Trita Parsi, *Treacherous Alliance: ..., op., cit.*, pp. 27-28.
5. For detail on the Arab Cold War see: Malcolm H. Kerr, *The Arab Cold War, 1958-1967: A Study of Ideology in Politics*, Oxford University Press, London, 1967.
6. Gholam Reza Afkhami, *The Life and Times of the Shah*, University of California Press, USA, 2009, pp. 351-352.
7. Merrill A. Rosenberg, 'Iran', *The American Jewish Year Book*, Vol. 75, 1974-75, p. 542.
8. Christin Marschall, *Iran's Persian Gulf Policy from Khomeini to Khatami*, RoutledgeCurzon, New York, USA, 2003, p. 6. See also: Barry Rubin, *Paved with Good Intentions: ..., op., cit.*, pp. 124-135.
9. Gholam Reza Afkhami, *The Life and the Times of the Shah, op., cit.*, p. 269.
10. Barry Rubin, *Paved with Good Intentions: ..., op., cit.*, pp. 132, 151; James A. Bill, *The Eagle and the Lion: ..., op., cit.*, pp. 368-374.
11. James A. Bill, *The Eagle and the Lion: ..., op., cit.*, pp. 367.
12. *Op., cit.*, p. 349-350.
13. Henry Alfred Kissinger (1923- ), who served as National Security Advisor (1969-1975) and later concurrently as Secretary of State (1973-1977) in administrations of President Richard Nixon (1969-1974) and Gerald Ford (1974-1977).
14. In the wake of the British withdrawal from 'east of Suez', the US government became dependent on the regional powers to preserve the status quo in the region from internal pro-communist or pro-Nasserist revolution and from external Soviet threats. To that end, the Nixon Doctrine was announced in Guam in June 1969.
15. Iranian military power and Saudi Arabian cooperation and financing jointly formed US "twin pillars" strategy. The US counted on these two allies to provide regional security and for that the Nixon administration decided to strengthen them by all means including militarily under "twin pillars" strategy in the context of Nixon Doctrine.
16. R. K. Ramanzani, *The Persian Gulf and the Strait of Hormuz*, Volume Three, Sijthoff & Noordhoff, The Netherlands, 1979, pp. 118-119. Shahram Chubin and Sephr Zabih, p. 258.
17. Madawi al-Rasheed, *A History of Saudi Arabia*, Cambridge University Press, UK, 2002, p. 130. King Faisal's three famous slogans were: no recognition of the State of Israel, no negotiations with Israel, and no peace with Israel.
18. Joseph Kostiner, *Conflict and Cooperatin in the Gulf Region*, VS Verlag für Sozialwissenschaften, Printed in the Netherlands, 2009, p. 144.
19. Roham Alvandi, 'Nixon, Kissinger, and the Shah: the origins of Iranian primacy in the Persian Gulf,' *Diplomatic History*, 2012, Vol. 36, No. 2, p. 354.
20. Kenneth Katzman, *Searching for Stable Peace in the Persian Gulf* DIANE Publishing, USA, 1998, p. 7; Shahram Chubin and Sephr Zabih, *The Foreign Relations of Iran: ..., op., cit.*, p. 259.
21. However, Eric Hooglund referred to the period since 1972 as very close patron-client relationship when US agreed to sell Iran the most advanced and sophisticated conventional weapons in its own military arsenal. See: Eric Hooglund (ed.), *Twenty Years of Islamic Revolution: Political and Social Transition in Iran since 1979*, p. 158.
22. Memorandum of Conversation, Tehran, May 31, 1972. U.S. Department of State, *Papers Relating to the Foreign Relations of the United States (FRUS), 1969-1976*, E-4, Documents on Iran and Iraq, 1969-1972, Document 201. All documents from the U.S. Department of State's *FRUS* series are henceforth cited in the format *Title*, Volume, Document Number. All are accessible at <http://history.state.gov/historicaldocuments/>
23. Quoted in Roham Alvandi, *op., cit.*, p. 370.
24. Roham Alvandi, *op., cit.*, p. 364.
25. Peter Mangold, *Superpower Intervention in the Middle East*, Croom Helm, London, 1978, pp. 90-91; Donald Neff, 'The U.S., Iraq, Israel, and Iran: Backdrop to War', *Journal of Palestine Studies*, Vol. 20, No. 4, Summer, 1991, p. 26; Barry Rubin, *Paved with Good Intentions: ..., op., cit.*, p. 134.
26. A political scandal was named so after the apartment block in Washington D.C., where the offices of the Democratic Party were broken into by the agents of President Nixon's (Republican Party) campaign managers in the summer of 1972.
27. James A. Bill, *The Eagle and the Lion: ..., op., cit.*, p. 204.
28. Dilip Hiro, *Iran under the Ayatollahs, op., cit.*, p. 307.
29. James A. Bill, *The Lion and the Eagle: ..., op., cit.*, pp. 226-227.
30. For example, the Carter administration agreed to provide arms to the Shah only when the Shah pledged to support price reduction of oil in the upcoming OPEC meeting and encourage Egypt and Jordan to support the future US-led Arab-Israeli peace settlement.
31. R. K. Ramazani, 'Who Lost America? The Case of Iran', *op., cit.*, p. 20.

## Section III

### Iran-US Military Relations: 1953-1979

#### Introduction

This section will follow the history of Iran-US military relations during the 1953-1979 period. Upon his restoration following the CIA-instigated coup d'état in 1953, the Shah set two goals: to develop Iran economically at the fastest pace possible (see chapter 6) and to transform the country into a regional military giant. Parallel to the Shah's goal, the Eisenhower administration strongly viewed that a militarily strong Iran was a complement to US interests in the region. The Eisenhower administration also viewed that Iran's military buildup could bring direct political and strategic benefits to US by enabling American military forces to have access to strategic bases that would be maintained by Iran with US weaponry. Therefore, successive US administrations from 1953 promptly encouraged a US-supported arms buildup in Iran. While in the post-Nixon-Doctrine period, Washington saw Iran as a key force for peace in the region and it no longer discouraged Iran in its bid for arms acquisition from the US. In his memoirs the Shah's number one friend General Hossein Fardoust has noted: "The Americans influenced deeply in the army and security forces. They provided the mainstream of Iranian army's weapons and equipments in return for the petro-dollars. This trend continued until the Revolution."<sup>1</sup>

The growth and development of Iran-US military relations during this period (1953-1979), however, took place in three phases. **First**, through providing extensive training to Iranian security forces (police and army) by US military trainers and advisers. **Second**, through providing military aid (grants in aid for the purpose of purchasing arms up to 1967, and since then in payment) to Iran by the US government and **third**, through intelligence sharing between Iran and the US. They are listed and surveyed below under following sub-headings:

- A. US Military Training to Iranian Armed and Security Forces**
- B. US Military Aid to Iran**
- C. Intelligence Sharing between Tehran and Washington**

#### **A. US Military Training to Iranian Armed and Security Forces**

The US involvement in building a strong Iranian armed and security forces by providing experts and advisers for training began during the WWII as reviewed in chapter 1. This involvement gained momentum immediately after the 1953 coup and continued till 1978. Reportedly, until the end of 1978, the Iranian armed and security forces were trained by 1,200 military advisers, and assisted by 7,500 civilian technicians, from the US.<sup>2</sup> The boundless US military training to Iranian security forces was seen in the following fields.

**(i) The Creation of Iran's Dreaded Secret Police—SAVAK**

As previously stated, following the 1953 coup d'état the Shah had two types of threats: internal and external. To defuse the external threats Iran's Shah forged a close client-patron relations with the US, while to contain the internal threats (of communists or members from National Front) the US military assistance directly helped the client to develop Iran's intelligence service which eventually became the SAVAK in 1957.<sup>3</sup> Immediately after the 1953 coup d'état, the US government sent Colonel Meade to Iran under cover as a military attaché to organize, train, and command a new intelligence unit. He worked there more than one year and left Iran in early 1955. Other US military and CIA personnel including Colonel H. Norman Schwarzkopf continued to provide all-out support to this intelligence unit. Over time, this unit evolved into the Shah's dreaded security agency, the SAVAK in 1957. SAVAK was Iran's combination of FBI-CIA since US intelligence agencies set up, trained, and helped directly this secret police of Iran. Israeli intelligence-MOSSAD also played a major part in the creation and operation of SAVAK as narrated in section 1. Over the years from its creation in 1957 to the height of Islamic Revolution in 1978, the US and Israel closely cooperated Iranian intelligence matters through SAVAK. Many SAVAK officials went to the US to be trained by the CIA. According to an estimate, in 1972 the CIA was annually training 400 SAVAK operatives at its headquarters in Langley, Virginia.<sup>4</sup>

**(ii) The US Assisted in the Iranian Armed Forces**

The US also helped in bringing about many improvements in Iran's armed services. In army, the US helped Iran to create an intelligence wing by the name of G-2 aimed at building a strong Iranian army. The US mission by the name of Gendarmerie Military Mission or GENMISH which began to advise Iranian Interior Ministry since 1942, continued its task even after the 1953 coup d'état. Iran's Military College which had been established by the Shah's father now began to run on the lines of West point under the supervision of GENMISH.<sup>5</sup> In 1951 when a full-fledged military assistance and advisory group was set up, the GENMISH gave Iran valuable advice on such matters as military organization and training. With the beginning of close bilateral relations between Iran and the US after 1953, Washington's step toward Iranian military training took full scale. Reportedly, the Iranian armed forces were formally reorganized after the US model in August 1955.<sup>6</sup> The US Army and Air Force Mission to the Iranian Army continued to be called ARMISH up to 1962, while another mission named Military Assistance Advisory Group (MAAG) from 1962 to 1978 were assisting Iranian army until the collapse of the Shah and his Imperial Guard. The ARMISH assisted the Iranian army—aided also the general staff in organization and planning, while the MAAG assisted in military procurement for the Iranian armed forces. The US military missions in Iran were mostly in weapons training, individual

training, small unit training—squads, platoon, companies, and battalions. By the late 1960s, the focus was more on policy and guidance. Meanwhile, Technical Assistance Field Team, or TAFT Agreement bound the US to send 552 personnel at the cost of \$16.6 million to provide instruction to foreign personnel on specific equipment, technology, weapons and supporting systems on a scale beyond Mobile Training Teams, or MTT and ARMISH-MAAG.<sup>7</sup>

As the scope and area of Iranian army broadened, the size of US military aid mission in Iran was doubled. During 1953-1963 period, the number of US military personnel and advisors exceeded to 10,000 and by 1972 over 11,000 US military experts and advisors were working in Iran. According to Amin Saikal, US aid and personnel played a decisive role in helping the client's regime, between 1953 and 1960, to reorganize and expand its army from about 100,000 men to 190,000, and build up a modern air force and navy with 8,000 and 4,000 trained personnel, respectively.<sup>8</sup> The size of Iran's armed forces rapidly grew to 255,000 in 1971. The size reached 385,000 in 1975 and finally increased to 413,000 (285,000 soldiers in the army, 28,000 in the navy, and 100,000 in the air force) by 1978, making it one of the largest military machine in the globe. Reportedly, between 1950 and 1965 some 2,000 and by 1972 more than 11,000 Iranian military personnel had received training in the US.<sup>9</sup>

### **(iii) The US and the Iranian Air Force and Navy**

While with essential US training, Imperial Iranian Army became highly mobile and efficient force, with modern arms and equipment and capable of serving Iran's national interests and the interests of its patron-partner—the US in the region, the Iranian Air Force and Navy were also modernized with Washington's assistance. To train the Iranian pilots for the most sophisticated fighter Phantom jets F-14s, an F-14 training base was established near Isfahan, and about 10,000 Americans were engaged there in the heart of Iran to make the plan a grand success. By 1977, the Iranian Air Force could claim about 100,000 strong force.<sup>10</sup> Alongside the Air Force, Iran's Navy was trained by US advisers and equipped with American sophisticated naval equipment. According to an estimate, trained by US military experts by 1976, Iran's combat forces included three armoured divisions, four infantry divisions, and one air-borne, and one special force naval brigade.<sup>11</sup>

### **B. US Military Aid to Iran**

Another important field through which Iran-US military relations evolved was US military aid to Iran. Throughout the long period between 1953 and 1979, the US continued to remain Iran's principal arms supplier. In 1956 Iran acquired 24 Lockheed T-33 training and reconnaissance planes from the US. Between 1956 and 1958, the US delivered 75 F-84G Thunder jet fighter bomber. The following year Washington supplied 70 Sabre jets to Tehran. Meanwhile, the



Iranian army received 200 Patton tanks in 1958. Following the signing of the Bilateral Mutual Security Agreement between Iran and the US on March 5, 1959, significant US military aid began to pour into Iran. Reportedly, US military aid to Iran from 1953 to 1961 was \$436 million.<sup>12</sup> US military aid to Iran was scaled back to a large degree during the Kennedy administration (1961-1963). However, this US military aid policy to Iran began to change with the coming of the Johnson administration in November 1963 and thus by 1963, Iran had become the largest non-NATO recipient of US military aid, having received \$535.4 million in grants from 1953 to 1963. On October 13, 1964, Iran granted the US much-desired and much-awaited SOFA for which Iran obtained a \$200 million credit loan from Washington two weeks later for purchasing US military equipment helped change US military aid policy to Iran.<sup>13</sup> This was a time when Iran-US military bond was growing closer due to the Shah's personal and close relations with President Johnson. During the Johnson administration (1963-1968) Washington and US Embassy in Tehran adopted the Shah's position and continued to sales arms to Iran although bargaining remained the constant factor in Iran-US military relations.<sup>14</sup>

The US military aid to Iran reached its zenith during the Nixon administration (1969-1974). Consequently, the Nixon administration witnessed the height of Iran-US military relations. The Nixon administration which made Iran one of its "twin pillars" in the Middle East along with Saudi Arabia, ultimately gave Iran the new status of US partner in the region to serve Washington's interests. Therefore, for its partner the US now opened the door of its arsenal (short of nuclear weapons) and thus special relationship developed in the field of military affairs between Tehran and Washington. The Nixon administration generally viewed the Shah's Iran as the central, pro-Western citadel in the Middle East.<sup>15</sup> Therefore, Washington responded positively and it agreed to supply arms worth \$600 million over a period of six-year.<sup>16</sup> In May 1972, during his short-lived visit to Tehran, President Nixon made the unprecedented promise to the Shah that Iran could purchase any weapons, short of nuclear weapons, it felt necessary for its defense from the US inventory.<sup>17</sup> Accordingly, following Nixon's trip Iran began ordering all kinds of sophisticated weapons from the US including sophisticated jets, such as, 200 F-14, 360 F-18, 400 F-16, 250 F-15, tanks for example, M-60, chieftain, submarines, destroyers, etc.<sup>18</sup> As a result, US arms transfer to Iran in 1973 exceeded \$2 billion, almost four times the 1972 amount.<sup>19</sup>

During Nixon's presidency, annual US military sales to Iran grew more than sevenfold, from \$94.9 million in 1969 to \$682.8 million in 1974, while they increased eightfold in two years: from \$519 million in 1972 to \$4,373 million in 1974.<sup>20</sup> The Ford administration (1974-1977) sought political favours from the Shah and generally approved the Shah's list of military shopping from the US. As it was evident, during the Carter administration (1977-1979) a striking

change was taking place in overall Iran-US relations because of the US attitude towards the Shah. This change was also reflected on Iran-US military relations. The new President tacitly abandoned the 1972 Iran-US understanding and returned to the normal arms-sales-review process for the first time in decade.<sup>21</sup> Despite this change the Carter administration chose to make Iran an exception with regard to US military sales to Iran.<sup>22</sup> As a result, US military sales to Iran reached more than \$2.55 billion in 1977. In 1977, Iran was the world's largest single purchaser of US arms, buying about \$5,700 million worth which accounted for more than half of the entire US arms sales to foreign countries.<sup>23</sup> Thus even before the Shah's fall, extensive arms sales to Iran continued while many assurances of continuing support were forth coming from Washington.<sup>24</sup> The US even went to support the Shah with nuclear elements (not for making weapons, rather civilian purposes) in the hope that it would be a symbol of Persian technological superiority over Arabs who were anti-Israel.<sup>25</sup> However, with the onset of the revolutionary movement the Shah's government forced to cancel major nuclear and military purchases. Below are two tables that show US military aid and sales to Iran.

**Table 3.1**

US Military Sales to Iran, 1950-1979 (*in millions of dollars*)

Years	Orders	Deliveries
	Amount	Amount
1950-1966	292.494	47.292
1967	143.873	38.866
1968	69.038	56.717
1969	251.573	94.881
1970	113.154	127.717
1971	396.841	79.352
1972	519.110	214.807
1973	2,571.355	238.633
1974	4,373.255	510.347
1975	3,020.979	956.372
1976	1,688.381	1466.767
1977	5,803.079	2,245.899
1978 (estimated)	3,000	—
1979 (estimated)	2,625	—
Total 1950-1978	24,454.102	6,718.270

**Sources:** The figures of this table are mainly based on Khosrow Fatemi, ‘The Iranian Revolution: Its Impact on Economic Relations with the United States’, *International Journal of Middle East Studies*, Vol. 12, No. 3, November 1980, p. 306. See also: *Encyclopaedia Iranica*, “Army v. Pahlavi Period”, <http://www.iranicaonline.org/articles/army-v> (accessed on July 14, 2015); John D. Stempel, *Inside the Iranian Revolution*, *op. cit.*, p. 73; John P. Miglietta, *American Alliance Policy in the Middle East, 1945-1992: ...*, *op. cit.*, pp. 65, 67; Morteza Gharehbaghian, ‘Oil Revenue and the Militarisation of Iran: 1960-1978’, *Social Scientist*, Vol. 15, No. 4-5, April-May, 1987, p. 95; Leslie M. Pryor, “Arms and the Shah”, *Foreign Policy*, No. 31, Summer 1978, p. 57.

**Table 3.2**US Military Aid and Sales to Iran (*deliveries in millions of dollars*)

Year	Grant	Sales	Total
1965	49.1	-0-	49.1
1966	41.0	3.6	44.6
1967	10.6	38.8	49.4
1968	5.2	51.1	57.3
1969	3.1	94.8	97.9
1970	.5	127.7	128.2
1971	.3	79.3	79.6
1972	.2	214.8	215.0
1973	.2	245.2	245.4
1974	.2	648.6	648.8
1975	.1	1,006.1	1,006.2
1976	.05	1,924.9	1,924.9
1977	negligible	2,424.7	2,424.7
1978	negligible	1,907.3	1,907.3
1979	-0-	924.5	924.5

**Source:** John D. Stempel, *Inside the Iranian Revolution*, *op. cit.*, p. 69.

It is stated that the Shah dreamed of making Iran one of the five conventional military powers of the world and Washington was seen to fuel his ambitions to some extent by anointing his regime the policeman of the Persian Gulf and providing huge amount of sophisticated weaponry. Given, it is pertinent to state briefly why such huge volume of US arms sales to Iran took place during the 1953-1979 period. One estimate shows that by 1977 he had purchased over \$6 billion worth from the US and had more than \$12 billion on order.<sup>26</sup> Iran was a rare Israeli ally in the region

where anti-Israeli forces were active (for example, the Ba'athist Iraqi regime, Nasser's revolutionary Egypt, Faisal's Saudi Arabia) and were ready to destroy it. Many in Washington including Senator Jacob Javits who saw Shah's deep commitment to Israel, a country with few allies in the Middle East, always supported arms sales to Iran. Sometimes, he maneuvered brilliantly in the US Senate, subtly blocking aid to Arab countries while staunchly supporting military sales to Iran.<sup>27</sup> Furthermore, the US policy-makers supported massive arms sales to Iran in order to 'wipe out America's trade imbalance; to underwrite the cost of US weapons development; to assure high employment in the aerospace industry.'<sup>28</sup> Most importantly, arms sales to Iran were viewed as a way of recycling the petrodollars from Iran back to US.<sup>29</sup>

### **C. Intelligence Sharing between Tehran and Washington**

The third means of developing Iran-US military relations throughout the 1953-1979 years was the intelligence sharing between Tehran and Washington. Iran was especially important to the US in field of intelligence sharing because of Iran's geographical location vis-à-vis the Soviet Union. Sites in Iran became strategic assets for the US in the context of ongoing Cold War between Washington and Moscow. In fact, as part of the development of client-patron relations between Iran and the US, the Shah allowed the US to set up those listening-posts capabilities in northern Iran along the Russian border. It is pertinent to state that the March 1959 Bilateral Defense Agreement between Iran and the US provided formal channels for close cooperation in military intelligence between the two countries. As part of intelligence sharing, the US also maintained two super-secret, sophisticated electronic monitoring stations or listening posts of the CIA in northern Iran: one at Bihshahr and the other at Kapkan located forty miles east of Mashhad from where the US could easily overlook the Soviet missile development and test facilities at Turatom and Baiknour.

Iran thus became a valuable location for American intelligence gathering concerning Soviet missile testing in Central Russia.<sup>30</sup> The Iran-US relations on intelligence sharing deepened as time progressed. By 1977 over thirty different US military organizational units and non-military organizations were based in Iran for the above purpose as well as other developmental purposes that brought a new dimension in overall Iran-US relations. They included, among others, the CIA, the Defense Intelligence Agency, the Peace Corps and the Near East Foundation, Harvard Advisory Group, GENMISH and ARMISH-MAAG, Technical Assistance Field Teams (TAFT), "White-collar" mercenaries<sup>31</sup> (1973-1978), the US Agency for International Development, the Development and Resources Corporation, Point Four and the Ford Foundation. The US also maintained a military mission in Iran, on the southern flank of the Soviet Union. It is worth pointing out that since 1953 the CIA was working in Iran as Special Reporting Facility and the CIA officers in Iran were identified as Foreign Service Reserve Officers (FSRS) instead of

Foreign Service Officers (FSOS). Middle East analysts have observed that throughout the 1953-1979 period the CIA turned Tehran its headquarters for the whole Middle East region.<sup>32</sup> There were usually 10 CIA officers in Iran at any given time. Of them 6 or 7 would be primarily concerned with the Soviet Union and China. The other 3 or 4 followed Iranian domestic matters with a special emphasis on such issues as economics and oil, nuclear proliferation, and arms absorption.

In the intelligence sharing process, Shah's SAVAK exchanged information with the CIA and when needed SAVAK sought help regarding important information from the FBI and the CIA and they provided that help in time. In fact, the CIA and SAVAK penetrated one another as SAVAK's policies were immediately linked to the CIA and for that the CIA was considered as the god-father to SAVAK.<sup>33</sup> The liaison work between SAVAK and the CIA continued until the overthrow of the Shah since it was helpful to both sides with respect to the common threat of the Soviet Union. The CIA also exchanged information with SAVAK on Iranian students living and studying in the US who were justified by the Shah's regime as real problem with terrorists and on figures who opposed Shah's rule staying in the US. It is important to state that SAVAK also operated in the US with a view to gathering information about the Iranian individuals and students spreading views against the Shah in the US.<sup>34</sup>

### Conclusion

In the light of the above study it may be said as final words that the Iran-US military relations developed in two main phases: first during the 1953-1968 period within the context of Iran-US client-patron relationship, and second, during the 1969-1979 period under Iran-US partnership-special relations. Although Iran-US military-aid relationship had fluctuated widely in the context of the Cold War, and although the Shah repeatedly showed his unhappiness for the US military aid, both countries benefitted from Tehran-Washington military relationship. There is no dispute in the fact that because of close Iran-US military relations, Iran was able to establish the most advanced powerful and modern army, air force and navy. Upon such military might and due to growing military relations between Iran and the US, Iran became a strong regional power and it was able to take responsibility of the Persian Gulf after the British withdrawal in 1971.

### Notes and References of Section III of Chapter 3

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1. Hossein Fardoust, *The Rise and Fall of Pahlavi Dynasty: ...*, *op. cit.*, pp. 239-240. See also: Shahram Chubin and Sephr Zabih, *The Foreign Relations of Iran: ...*, *op. cit.*, pp. 4, 105; John P. Miglietta, *op. cit.*, p. 94; Nikki R. Keddie, 'The Iranian Revolution and the U.S. Policy', *SALS Review*, No. 3, Winter 1981-1982, p. 16.

2. Saiyid Athar Abbas Rizvi, *Iran: ... , op., cit.*, p. 275. By 1978 total US advisers in different fields reduced 43,000.
3. For a full discussion of SAVAK see: James A. Bill, *The Eagle and the Lion: ... , op., cit.*, p. 98; Edward W. Said, *Covering Islam: How the Media and the Experts Determine How We See the Rest of the World*, Vintage, London, 1997, p. 120, Blake: pp. 106-107; Saiyid Athar Abbas Rizvi, *Iran: ... , op., cit.*, pp. 244-319. After the Islamic Revolution the SAVAK was transformed into SAVAMA—the revolutionary government’s intelligence organization.
4. Dilip Hiro, *Iran under the Ayatollahs, op., cit.*, p. 306.
5. *Mission for my country, op., cit.*, p. 64.
6. Gholam Reza Afkhami, *The Life and the Times of the Shah, op., cit.*, p. 288.
7. Thomas M. Ricks, ‘U.S. Military Missions to Iran, 1943-1978: ...’, *op., cit.*, pp. 174-184.
8. Amin Saikal, *The Rise and Fall of the Shah: ... , op., cit.*, pp. 54.
9. Hossein Fardoust, *The Rise and Fall of Pahlavi Dynasty: ... , op., cit.*, p. 240; Amin Saikal, *The Rise and Fall of the Shah: ... , op., cit.*, pp. 54; Fakhreddin Azimi, *The Quest for Democracy in Iran: ... , op., cit.*, p. 264; John D. Stempel, *Inside the Iranian Revolution, op., cit.*, p. 29.
10. Dilip Hiro, *Iran under the Ayatollahs, op., cit.*, p. 96.
11. Saiyid Athar Abbas Rizvi, *Iran: ... , op., cit.*, pp. 273.
12. For more see: Rouhollah K. Ramazani, *Iran’s Foreign Policy, 1941-1973: ... , op., cit.*, p. 286; Amin Saikal, *The Rise and Fall of the Shah: ... , op., cit.*, pp. 54; John P. Miglietta, *op., cit.*, pp. 43-45. Kenneth M. Pollack, *The Persian Puzzle: ... , op., cit.*, p. 77.
13. Rouhollah K. Ramazani, *Iran’s Foreign Policy, 1941-1973: ... , op., cit.*, p. 361; Shahram Chubin and Sephr Zabih, *The Foreign Relations of Iran: ... , op., cit.*, p. 105.
14. James A. Bill, *The Eagle and the Lion: ... , op., cit.*, p. 172; Shahram Chubin and Sephr Zabih, *The Foreign Relations of Iran: ... , op., cit.*, pp. 109-111; Rouhollah K. Ramazani, *Iran’s Foreign Policy, 1941-1973: ... , op., cit.*, p. 364; Stephen McGlinchey, ‘Lyndon B. Johnson and Arms Credit Sales to Iran 1964–1968’, *The Middle East Journal*, Vol. 67, No. 2, Spring 2013, p. 245.
15. Spencer C. Tucker (ed.), *The encyclopedia of Middle East Wars: The United States in the Persian Gulf Afghanistan, and Iraq Conflicts*, (vol. III: M-S), ABC-CLIO, California, USA, 2010, p. 1034.
16. Rouhollah K. Ramazani, *Iran’s Foreign Policy, 1941-1973: ... , op., cit.*, p. 267. The US military equipments included: squadrons of the late-model Phantom jet fighter-bombers.
17. John D. Stempel, *Inside the Iranian Revolution, op., cit.*, p. 73; Joseph Kostiner, *op., cit.*, pp. 39, 144; Shahram Chubin and Sephr Zabih, *The Foreign Relations of Iran: ... , op., cit.*, pp. 111-112.
18. Morteza Gharehbaghian, ‘Oil Revenue and the Militarisation of Iran: 1960-1978’, *Social Scientist*, Vol. 15, No. 4-5, April-May, 1987, p. 94.
19. F. Gregory Gause, *op., cit.*, p. 265.
20. Dilip Hiro, *Iran under the Ayatollahs, op., cit.*, p. 306.
21. Barry Rubin, *Paved with Good Intentions: ... , op., cit.*, p. 196.
22. R. K. Ramazani, ‘Who Lost America? The Case of Iran’, *op., cit.*, p. 13. See also: James A. Bill, *The Lion and the Eagle: ... , op., cit.*, p. 228.
23. Amin Saikal, *The Rise and Fall of the Shah: ... , op., cit.*, p. 158.
24. James A. Bill, *The Lion and the Eagle: ... , op., cit.*, p. 202; Alan R. Taylor, *The Super-Powers and the Middle East*, Syracuse University Press, New York, 1991, p. 117; John P. Miglietta, *op., cit.*, pp. 64-76.
25. Selig S. Harrison, ‘The Forgotten Bargain: Nonproliferation and Nuclear Disarmament’, *World Policy Journal*, Fall, 2006, p.3.
26. R. K. Ramazani, ‘Iran’s Foreign Policy: Contending Orientations,’ *Middle East Journal*, Vol. 43, No. 2, Spring, 1989, p. 203.
27. James A. Bill, *The Eagle and the Lion: ... , op., cit.*, p. 365.
28. Nader Entessar, ‘Superpowers and Persian Gulf Security: The Iranian Perspective’, *Third World Quarterly*, Vol. 10, No. 4, October, 1988, pp. 1431.
29. James A. Bill, *The Lion and the Eagle: ... , op., cit.*, p. 203.
30. For more about this see: Hossein Fardoust, *The Rise and Fall of Pahlavi Dynasty: ... , op., cit.*, p. 283; Barry Rubin, *Paved with good intentions: ... , op., cit.*, p. 187.
31. White collar mercenaries used to perform technical services under contract to US arms firms.
32. Eric Hooglund (ed.), *Twenty Years of Islamic Revolution: ... , op., cit.*, p. 145.
33. James A. Bill, *The Eagle and the Lion: ... , op., cit.*, p. 416.
34. Dilip Hiro, *Iran under the Ayatollahs, op., cit.*, pp. 55, 306.

## **Section IV**

### **Iran-US Strained Relations (1953-1979): The Paradox of Close Relations**

#### **Introduction**

It would be inappropriate to argue that Iran-US relations were all right during the 1953-1979 period as reviewed in previous sections. The documentary evidence shows that in the wake of the 1953 coup d'état the state-to-state close bilateral relations developed between Iran and the US on political, military, economic and cultural levels and both countries enjoyed the benefits of these relations. However, under the surface there were mistrust and frustration between the two countries that resulted in strained relations. Given the scale and intensity of the strained relationship that prevailed between the two countries particularly, after the restructuring of the Anglo-Iranian Oil Company into the American-British dominated NIOC in 1954 which marred the client-patron relations and it continued through the Iran-US special-partner relations (1960-1979), the term "close relations" with regard to Iran-US bilateral relations appears to be misleading. In fact, Tehran-Washington strained relationship is a paradox of Iran-US close relations of 1953-1979 period. This section is the study of Iran-US strained relations during the 1953-1979 period. The section will closely look at the factors of the Iran-US strained relations, to what extent this sort of Iran-US relationship developed, and how it affected the existing Iran-US bilateral relations of the period.

#### **The Growth and Development of the Iran-US Strained Relations**

A variety of troubling factors adversely affected relations between Tehran and Washington from the very start of their client-patron relationship which continued unabated till 1979. These all are briefly investigated under the following subheadings.

##### **(a) The Shah's Discontent over US Economic Aid**

On top of these factors that caused Iran-US strained relations was the Shah's discontent over the volume of US economic aid to Iran. Against the established perception that the CIA-led 1953 coup d'état ushered in a close bilateral relationship between Iran and the US, the Shah and his new Prime Minister General Fazlullah Zahedi remained aggrieved with the US for the amount of economic aid Washington provided to Tehran during the critical years following the 1953 coup d'état. Immediately after the 1953 changeover the US government sanctioned \$23.4 million on September 3, 1953 and on September 5, President Eisenhower himself granted \$45 million to Iran, however, the amounts were regarded as insufficient by the Shah and Prime Minister Zahedi.<sup>1</sup> The Shah saw that the US government did not go to provide emergency financial aid to Iran until new

oil arrangement was made ensuring a big share for US oil companies (40%) in the Iranian oil industry. Reportedly, on October 26, 1954, US officials stated categorically that the amount of US aid to Iran in 1954-1955 would not be finally determined until after the Iranian Majlis had ratified the oil agreement. Earlier in a meeting following the coup Kermit Roosevelt assured the Shah that he [the Shah] had “absolutely no obligation” toward the US. But the Shah witnessed that how a major aid package of \$127 million was announced on November 2, 1954, just after the Iranian Majlis ratified the consortium agreement which guaranteed the US a lion’s share in the oil business in Iran. The Shah viewed this as the payoff for his country’s acceptance of the new oil arrangements. Eminent expert R. K. Ramazani has revealed that the Shah had signed the oil consortium agreement (1954) reluctantly because it did not give him all the oil revenues he needed to strengthen his regime. But he signed it, nevertheless, because the Iranian economy was bankrupt, because the agreement involved American interests in the Iranian oil industry, because it broke the traditional British monopoly, and because the American government pressed the oil companies to make room for the re-entry of the Iranian oil supplies into the world markets.<sup>2</sup>

Besides, the Shah was bitter about Washington’s continued reluctance to increase aid. The Shah needed financial aid for the completion of the First Seven-Year Development Plan (1949-1955) which had been adopted in 1949 but remained ineffective due to the Iran’s shattering economy since the 1951-1953 oil crisis. In this context, although between 1953 and 1961 Iran received about \$611 million in economic aid from the US, however, the Shah constantly pressed President Eisenhower for more aid and stronger US commitment.<sup>3</sup> He also wrote to President Kennedy but Kennedy did neither respond to the Shah’s letter nor provide substantial economic aid to Iran. Without US aid financial crisis in Iran continued and as a result, US-favoured Prime Minister Ali resigned on July 18, 1962. Although by November 29, 1967, Iran received a total of \$605 million as fund from the US under the programme which the Shah considered insufficient. These led the Shah to confront the oil consortium about production levels allotted to Iran. The Shah insisted on increasing the production levels and put pressure to that end. His pressures were so great that the US government intervened to convince the oil companies in Iran to increase their production.<sup>4</sup> After this the US government adopted a counter measure to the Shah’s actions. Since 1965, the US began to “phase out” its economic and military grant aid to Iran declaring it as a “developed” country. The US eventually terminated its economic and military grants aid mission in 1967 which strained Iran-US relations to a considerable extent.

**(b) US-instigated Plot against the Shah: The Qarani Affair**

One of the major events of the strained relations prevailed between Iran and the US during 1953-1979 period came in the form of Shah’s real and perceived fear of US conspiracy to remove him



from power. On February 27, 1958, Shah's secret police—SAVAK unveiled a plot implicating US involvement in an attempted coup against the Shah. Shah's biographer Gholam Reza Afkhami relates that according to documents discovered in relation to an alleged coup being planned by the army's intelligence bureau (G-2) chief Major General Vali Qarani, Dr. Ali Amini—Iranian Ambassador to US was to become Prime Minister of Iran instead of incumbent Manouchehr Eqbal (1957-1960). Reports are also available that General Vali Qarani was arrested on charges of engaging in political activity, a practice that was forbidden at the time for all Iranian government employees. Then it was alleged that Qarani and his collaborators (Ali Amini and Hasan Arsanjani who became Minister of Agriculture of the Amini cabinet in 1961) had been conspiring with an unnamed foreign power—generally understood to be the US—against the Shah's regime.<sup>5</sup>

The widely held view is that being failed to persuade the client (the Shah) for reforms for economic management of Iran the patron opted for an alternative to the Shah through the Qarani episode. Although on discovery, the US Embassy denied any involvement in the plot, the Shah remained suspicious and because of his patron's involvement he did not react severely and gave only light sentences to all involved in the conspiracy.<sup>6</sup> As a consequence, the Qarani affair caused a sort of uneasy political situation between Tehran and Washington and seriously strained Iran-US relations. Reportedly, the Shah later learned that the US had known about the Qarani coup and had said nothing for which his distrust of America doubled. Scholar like Amin Saikal remarks that the affair underlined Washington's attempt to make clear to the Shah that there were still alternatives to him should he fail to speed up the process of reform necessary both for his own rule and for the continuation of Iran's alliance with the West. While Mark J. Gasiorowski has observed: "the Qarani affair had a considerable impact on Iranian politics, inadvertently weakening a potentially important opposition faction, seriously disrupting U.S.-Iranian relations..."<sup>7</sup> After the revelation of the Qarani affair the Shah became so suspicious of the CIA that he tried to replace CIA advisers with MOSSAD officials.<sup>8</sup>

**(c) The US Pressure for Reforms Caused Shah's Enormous Displeasure**

The US persistent pressure on the Shah for socio-economic reforms in Iran was another important factor in the development of strained relations between Tehran and Washington. Since 1953, the successive US governments wanted to ensure that the funds it provided Iran were well spent with the adoption of wise policies. By 1960, Iranian financial position markedly deteriorated and the US policy of pressuring the Shah for reforms increased. With John F. Kennedy becoming President in January 1961, pressure grew on the Shah to implement wide-ranging reform.<sup>9</sup> For that the Kenney administration marked the height of Iran-US strained relations. In the informed words of an analyst, "The Shah's disagreements with the United States during this period ran much deeper than

his visceral disapproval of any policy that stressed major reform.”<sup>10</sup> Meanwhile, Washington found it necessary to press the Shah for urgent socio-economic reforms which eventually resulted in the White Revolution that the Shah initiated in January 1963. It is pertinent to mention here that the White Revolution came following the US prescription mainly for the land reforms “dictated by the then President of USA, Kennedy”<sup>11</sup> The Shah was, to a considerable degree, fed up with US pressure for introducing reforms in Iran and harbored hidden suspicions that the US was planning a revolution against him. Due to US pressure for reforms and intensified interference in Iran the Shah later singled out 1962-1963 period as the “worst period” in Iran-US relations as the US tried to impose its own type of regime on Iranian people.<sup>12</sup>

**(d) Shah’s Unhappiness with the US Military Assistance to Iran, the Size of Iranian Army and Price of US Weaponry**

The Shah’s disappointment with the US also grew over the quantum of US military assistance to Iran, the price of US weaponry sold to Iran and the size of Iran’s army. The Shah’s displeasure with US regarding the less US military aid to Iran caused to certain degree of Iran-US strained relations.<sup>13</sup> The Shah’s unhappiness due to US military aid to Iran short of his expectation increased considerably during the Kennedy administration. Although President Kennedy voiced for continuous US support for Iran and indicated that the US was sympathetic to Iran’s needs, he refrained from giving any concrete indications of military aid which angered the Shah a lot. During his state visit to the US from April 10 to 18, 1962, the Shah met with President Kennedy and sought military and economic aid for he had initiated a modernization programme for the Iranian army that required a total of \$424 million. The US was ready to provide not more than \$330 million. This caused the Shah’s disappointment to such an extent that when a five-year military aid package was presented to the Shah for signing, the frustrated Shah did not agree to sign it.

Differing perspectives over the issue of the military force levels or the size and function of the Iranian army alongside the US military aid and sales to Iran also added a new dimension to the prevalent Iran-US strained relations. The Kennedy administration generally viewed that Iran’s military was too large and it was expensive, wasteful, and damaging to the country’s economy. Therefore, Washington insisted the Shah to reduce the expense on military matters by scaling back Iran’s military from 240,000 men to 150,000 men.<sup>14</sup> Washington also suggested the Shah to employ military personnel in civic actions programmes. The Shah, for his part, argued that a strong military was essential for external and internal security of Iran and refused to go with US suggestions. It was during this time the Kennedy administration reduced military aid substantially. A statistics shows that in 1960 under Eisenhower Iran received \$85 billion military aid while in 1961 under Kennedy administration it was reduced to \$58.6 billion and in 1962 it scaled down to

only \$44.7 billion. Thus, during the Kennedy administration Iran became a low-priority military recipient of US arms and Iran-US relations reached its nadir.<sup>15</sup>

Meanwhile, following the war between India and Pakistan in mid-1965 and the continued specter of Arab Cold War between Egypt and Saudi Arabia over North Yemen (1962-1968), the Shah felt that Iran's regional situation had become more acute and in June 1965, the Shah warned that unless the US sold him the modern F-4D fighter plane, he might turn to Moscow for equivalent equipment. The strained relationship between Tehran and Washington over US military aid to Iran reached to such a point that when in 1965 and 1966 UN General Assemblies brought a US-supported resolution on Albania declaring this an "important" question, Iran abstained from supporting it.<sup>16</sup> The Shah resented the "papa knows best" attitude of the US towards Iran's military requirements. When this fact was cabled Washington by Ambassador Meyer, the State Department recognized this and talked about a near crisis in Iran-US relations. The Shah also resented the US policy of annual review whereby Washington reserved the right to limit its arms sales to Iran on the basis of an assessment of Iran's general economic well-being. Under such condition the Shah and his Prime Minister Asadollah Alam bluntly let the US know that Iran was no longer to be "taken for granted" and that the Shah was not US "lackey." Whether this was a bluff or not, this strained the Tehran-Washington relationship a great deal since after the Shah turned to the Soviet Union and in January 1966, the dissatisfied Shah dramatically agreed to purchase \$110 million in Soviet arms supplies. In an interview to the *Los Angeles Times* on February 23, 1967, the Shah made it clear that financial and logistical conditions imposed by the US on the sale of US military hardware had forced him to negotiate an arms deal with Moscow.

In June 1968 when the Johnson administration agreed to provide Iran only with \$100 million in annual military sales credits, the Shah remained unhappy with the package. As a result, the frustrated Shah used to apply threatening tactic of change sides in this way: "What you refuse me I will obtain from the other side." It is said that he even threatened to abdicate in a period when he felt he was not obtaining the US support he deserved. It is also stated that during his visit to Washington in 1968, the Shah was quoted as saying, "Let me tell you quite bluntly that this king-business has given me personally nothing but headaches."<sup>17</sup> Noticing such position of the Shah years later President Carter categorically made it clear that 'managing the U.S.-Iranian arms supply relationship would be easier if Iran would reduce its arms requests'.<sup>18</sup> Apart from the Shah's perpetual accusations that the US provided less military aid to Iran than it needed, he also accused Washington of overcharging him. There is no escaping the fact that having failed to influence the Shah to reconsider oil nationalization and to reduce oil price the US government overcharged Iran for its services and weapons which the Iranian government told the US

government over and over again in the form of complaint. For example, once the Shah pointed out that whereas the price of a Soviet MIG was only \$600,000 to \$700,000, the cost of an F-4 was well over \$3 million. In 1975 Iran paid over \$100,000 for the services of a typical US military technician. At about the same time, Iran's Deputy War Minister and Iran's chief arms procurement officer General Toufanian complained to General Howard Fish of the US Defence Security Assistance Agency that the price of one weapons system had been raised by 50% in three years. In reply, General Fish told Toufanian: "The price of oil has tripled".<sup>19</sup> Such complaints and counter complaints were the common features in Iran-US relations during the 1970s. Barry Rubin has noted that these cross accusations produced more and more disenchantment between the two partners.<sup>20</sup>

**(e) Tehran's Leanings toward the Soviet Union**

Tehran-Washington relationship was further strained over Tehran's turning towards the Soviet Union—the arch enemy of the US during the ongoing Cold War. In actuality, from the early 1960s, Iranian tendency to turning towards the Soviet Union became a common feature which put Iran-US relations at great odds. Peter Avery has argued that during the Kennedy administration Iran's Shah felt unease to a considerable extent about changes of US policy toward Iran, specifically in the fields of economic and military aid to Iran. This US policy change led Iran for a rapprochement with the Soviet Union.<sup>21</sup> This in turn shook the very foundation of Iran-US close relations that began since 1953. In the course of the strained Iran-US relations over US economic and military aid to Iran, on September 15, 1962, Tehran unilaterally pledged to prohibit the basing of foreign missiles on its soil hinting any future US such bases in Iran. This action led the US to seek alternative facilities in the region for the spying installations.

Meanwhile, from June 21 to July 3, 1965 the Shah made a state visit to the Soviet Union. Following his visit there was a major Tehran-Moscow commercial agreement signed in January 1966 that provided for the establishment of a steel mill and gas pipeline later became known as the gas-for-steel agreement. Following this expansion of Iran-Soviet economic cooperation the Shah emerged as 'a dead man' to the US.<sup>22</sup> Noticing growing ties between Tehran and Moscow back in May, 1966, the CIA expressed deep concerns upon learning that the Shah had been entertaining possible Soviet oil concessions in the south and west of Iran and predicted that Iran-US relations "may reach a critical point" as a result.<sup>23</sup> In this context, as the Shah scheduled a state visit to the Soviet Union in September 1968, Washington got seriously alarmed and President Johnson requested the Shah to cancel the visit. The Shah turned down Johnson's request and visited Moscow. Analysts view that the changed international environment provided Iran not only more maneuverability between the superpowers and a relatively new importance, but also more

opportunity to actively pursue its own interests in world politics in which Iran was careful not to identify too strongly with either superpowers, but to maintain friendly relations with both. Whatever Iran was gaining from befriending Moscow, the US saw this development with deep suspicion. Stephen McGlinchey is of the view that the summer of 1968 was the high point in an otherwise frustrating, and at times highly-strained period of history between Iran and the US, in which diplomacy reached frequent low points and overcame several crises, particularly with regard to the Shah's brinkmanship with the Soviet Union.<sup>24</sup> Tehran's turning towards the Soviet Union continued even in the 1970s which in turn estranged Tehran-Washington relations a lot.

**(f) Iranian Hegemonic Aspiration in the Persian Gulf and Military Build-up Posed Serious Challenge to the US**

Iran's hegemonic aspiration since the early 1970s and military build-up were, without a doubt, other important factors for which Tehran's relations with Washington continued strained till 1979. Britain's actual withdrawal from the Persian Gulf region in 1971 completed the process of Iran's rise as a regional power or as a hegemon in the Persian Gulf—a status which the Johnson administration did not want to endorse willingly.<sup>25</sup> Iran's image as a regional power promoted the Shah to accelerate his drive to achieve his ultimate national goal: *Tamaddun-e Buzurg* or the Great Civilization with an independent foreign policy. In this regard, the Shah, with oil revenue, prioritized Iran's development into a mighty, self-sufficient, and self-generating “economic and military power” capable of guarding its own region and beyond against what the Shah perceived to be regional subversion and instability as well as against outside powers' “hostile” and “hegemonial” interference. Many in Washington feared the Shah's real goal to push Iran to the gates of “Great Civilization”. In the mid-1970s, General George Brown, then chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff disparagingly spoke of the Shah's visions of a revived Persian Empire.<sup>26</sup> Factually, the Shah's growing megalomaniac self-confidence in the 1970s based on his oil policy independent of the US and strong army equipped with advanced US weaponry in conjunction with his country's hegemonic aspiration enraged policymakers in Washington hugely. The Shah—holder of lofty title—*Aryamehr* or “The Aryan Sun” who wanted no restrained on his ambition to dominate the Persian Gulf region and beyond saw himself as the rightful leader in the Persian Gulf area among the oil-producing nations and possibly in the whole Indian Ocean basin and therefore, he publicly opposed the US military presence in the region and usually saw the US Naval base in Bahrain as a rival to his own suzerainty.<sup>27</sup>

In an interview in January 1972, soon after the British withdrawal, the Shah was asked what he thought about the US presence in Bahrain for which he had made a claim that it was a part of Iran (fourteenth province of Iran) and forfeited the claim in May 1970. In reply, the Shah categorically

stated that “we should not like to see a foreign power in the Persian Gulf. Whether that power be Britain, the United States, the Soviet Union or China our policy has not changed.”<sup>28</sup> Washington viewed the Shah’s opposition as a challenge that emanating from such a subservient client whom the patron restored to the power only two decades or more ago and who was then no longer a reliable ally. It is pertinent to state that by 1977 the US reformulated its policy towards the Persian Gulf which clearly stated that the main objective of the US in the region was to maintain its primacy in the Persian Gulf in order to reduce Soviet influence in the region. For that National Security Adviser of President Carter by the name of Zbigniew Brzezinski aggressively wanted to increase direct US presence and involvement in the Persian Gulf and the Indian Ocean as opposed to the established US policy under President Nixon and Ford when Iran and Saudi Arabia were assigned to play “twin pillars” role on behalf of the US.<sup>29</sup> Given such US policy change regarding the Persian Gulf, the later pronouncements of the Shah also added insult to US injury. Once the Shah boastfully claimed that “Iran was a power to be reckoned with”, while on 3 August 1974, he claimed; ‘Iranian army within five years will have a strength no one would dare come close to’. Then on 8 February 1975, he threatened the people with ‘blue eyes’ and claimed, ‘No country has the capability to attack Iran’.<sup>30</sup>

These pronouncements in line with his undertakings to the military build-up nervously alarmed the US. Some US officials were seen to point out that the Shah was becoming increasingly independent and that he would harness US strategy for his own purposes. They saw disdainfully but with alarm the Shah’s attempts in styling himself the ‘Emperor of the East’. A highly concerned CIA in a press report in 1975 described the Shah as “a dangerous megalomaniac, who is likely to pursue his own aims in disregard of U.S. interests.”<sup>31</sup> Alarmed with such boastful pronouncements the new Carter administrations locked in bargain with Iran over arms sale and it linked arms sales to improvement of political reforms and reduction of oil prices as stated above. Although Carter got assurance from the Shah of Iran’s moderate position on oil price while he satisfied the Shah having got approval from the Congress to sell Iran F-16s and AWACS, in fact he was not in a position to supply such super-sophisticated arms to Iran. As the revolution engulfed Iran, Tehran government cancelled a major arms deal with the US including AWACS. One observer has noted that it appears that the Carter administration did decide to sell the AWACS to Iran, but not before the Shah had been seriously weakened.<sup>32</sup>

**(g) The Algiers Accord of 1975 Made the Shah an Unpredictable Partner**

Since 1972 the US sought to weaken Iraq because of Baghdad’s strong anti-Israeli sentiment and for breaking up with Washington since 1967 Arab-Israeli war. For that the US encouraged and supplied arms to the Kurdish insurgents via Iran which was also the goal of Tehran. Since then

Iran and the US in association with Israel were collaborating the Kurdish against Soviet-supported Baathist regime in Iraq. However, in a complete change of mind and without informing the US and its ally Israel, on March 5, 1975 the Shah under the sponsorship of the OPEC and mediation of Algerian President Houari Boumediene (1965-1976) met with Iraqi vice-president Saddam Hussein in Algiers (see Appendices) to end disputes between Iran and Iraq over the Kurdish issue and the Shatt al-Arab waterway. Barry Rubin falsely claimed that when the Shah abandoned the Kurds to their fate, sealing his border with Iraq, Washington went along with his decision.<sup>33</sup> The actual case was just the opposite. Neither Secretary of State Henry Kissinger nor President Gerald Ford was aware about the Shah's sudden volte-face which generated immense anger of US and its ally Israel who were directly involved with Iran in creating trouble for Iraq by using the Iraqi Kurds.

The issue thus made the Shah an unpredictable US ally and from that time the US began losing its trust on him. Donald Neff (1930-2015)—an eminent American historian and journalist—is of the view that for the US and Israel, the agreement was disconcerting and unwanted. Referring to former CIA director Richard Helms, who was ambassador in Tehran at the time, Neff quoted: “Kissinger was furious—perhaps that’s too strong a word. He was disturbed by the agreement mainly probably because it freed Iraqi troops to turn westward toward Israel. But there was nothing he could do about it.”<sup>34</sup> More specifically for Israel, the agreement served as a warning signal that Iraq was changing course. The new course would obviously become a danger if Iraq succeeded in ingratiating itself in the West in competition with Israel, and in gaining Western weapons. US displeasure with the Shah doubled when after the Algiers Accord, Iraq hastened to develop relations with France, however, it continued to show no interest in resuming ties with Washington, broken since the 1967 Arab-Israeli war. This only increased Washington's tension about its ally Israel (given anti-Israeli sentiment of Iraq) just because of the unpredictable Shah. Therefore, even after the Algiers accord, although the US remained the major arms supplier to Iran, where by 1978 it maintained the largest US military mission in the world, irreparable damage was done in their basic tenet of Iran-US relations, particularly when Washington saw the Shah was acting against its vital ally Israel in line with Iraq.<sup>35</sup> Additionally, the US got seriously alarmed when in March 1975, the Shah concluded Algiers agreement with the strong Iraqi Vice-President, Saddam Hussein and the two leaders reaffirmed that the Persian Gulf should be free from any foreign intervention.<sup>36</sup>

#### **(h) The Indo-Pakistan Wars, the Emergence of Bangladesh, Yemen and Cyprus Issues**

The Indo-Pakistan wars of 1965 and 1971 also put Tehran's relations with Washington at great odds. In 1965 when South Asian arch rivals India and Pakistan locked in a war, Iran openly characterized India's action as “aggression”. By reason of being a pro-Western state and as

member of US-created Baghdad Pact-turned CENTO (in which Pakistan was also a member), Iran had hoped that the US would also support Pakistan. Sadly enough, when Washington cut off military aid and spare parts to Pakistan during its war with India in 1965, Shah bitterly commented: “Now we know that the United States would not come to aid us if we are attacked.”<sup>37</sup> After the war, Iran became doubtful of US assistance in time of need and it began to review its complete dependence on US. The sense of doubt about US helps augmented during the Indo-Pakistan war of 1971 which is also known as the War of Independence of Bangladesh.<sup>38</sup> Iran as a regional ally of Pakistan always stressed its support for the stability of Pakistan and when war broke out between India and Pakistan’s west and east wings then known as West Pakistan and East Pakistan, Iran lent its support to West Pakistan (hereinafter Pakistan). The US, also an ally of Pakistan, supported Pakistan during the war, but it failed to prevent the emergence of Bangladesh in December 1971. In fact, throughout the crisis, US President Nixon wanted to help Pakistan, but the tide of American opinion was against Pakistan because of the massacres of Bengali civilians in East Pakistan. Consequently, American military transfers to Pakistan were suspended by the State Department in April, and economic aid was halted in July, 1971.<sup>39</sup> The US failure to support its ally Pakistan against India in those wars further aggravated Iran’s dissatisfaction with the organization.<sup>40</sup> Credible evidence also show that the differing views of Tehran and Washington regarding the civil war in North Yemen (1962-1970) in the context of the Arab Cold War as well as the Cyprus issue further strained Iran-US relations.<sup>41</sup>

**(i) Shah’s Changed Attitude towards Israel Puts Iran-US Relations on the Slippery Slope**

The single strongest factor that further strained the Iran-US relations most during this time was the Shah’s changed attitude towards Israel. As elaborated in previous sections, one of the main components of Iran-US close relations that started in the wake of the 1953 coup d’état was Iran’s supportive (economic and political) policies towards Israel. Iran’s Shah remained as the staunch supporter of Israel by supplying Iran’s oil at critical times of 1956 Suez war and during the 1967 and 1973 Arab-Israeli wars. However, the Shah noticed an aggressive Israel showed its utmost reluctance to return Arab land occupied following the 1967 Six-Day war. Israel’s refusal to return Arab territories hardened the Shah’s position towards Israel who in an interview with a Yugoslavian newspaper in late 1967 stated that “any occupation of territory by force of arms shall not be recognized.” Thus, publicly the Shah opposed Israeli aggressive policy towards the Arabs, while privately he pressured Israel to let go of the occupied territories, which actually angered both Israel and its ally—the US. After this change in the Shah’s policy towards Israel, the Iranian press gave full support to the Arab cause in the October 1973 fighting.<sup>42</sup> Although the Shah steadfastly refused to send troops to aid the Arabs, however, during the war the Shah had expressed solidarity



with Egypt and come to assist Egypt by providing weapons and fuel and by allowing the Soviets to fly through the Iranian airspace. He also offered relief aid and gave aid to Egypt after the war. Much surprised to US-Israeli allies, the Shah condemned Israel when occupied the West Bank during and following the October 1973 war. As a result, the US-Israeli allies started doubting about the long-term intention of the Shah. Their doubts proved right when the Shah cemented his personal and political alliance with Egypt's President Anwar-al Sadat who had started the 1973 October war against Israel. Moreover, he showed his persistence in supporting Israeli withdrawal from the occupied Arab lands and the right of the Palestinian people to self-determination even if this would involve the establishment of some form of Palestinian entity adjacent to Israel.<sup>43</sup> This new attitude of the Shah towards Israel and Palestine issue not only angered the US, but also invited his own downfall in the long run.

**(j) The Iranian Nuclear Ambition Caused Serious US Concern**

Another important issue that strained Iran-US relations was the Shah's nuclear ambition. Historically, Iran's nuclear programme started under US auspices since 1957. By the mid-1970s the US government became doubtful about Tehran's nuclear activities. In the context of Shah's changed attitude towards Israel, Washington also feared that the megalomaniac Shah's intention about its nuclear activities were almost totally hidden political game because Iran's nuclear programme had its own economic-technical as well as politico-military dimensions. It is strongly believed that by the early 1970s the US clandestinely helped Israel to achieve nuclear weapons capabilities pursuing the "Don't ask, don't tell" policy. At the same time, the US policy was to prevent any Muslim nations—Arab or non-Arab—from acquiring nuclear capability in the belief that acquiring nuclear capability by any Muslim country might endanger Israel's security. In the background of such US policy, when the Shah intensified Iran's nuclear programme perhaps with an aim of seeking nuclear weapons,<sup>44</sup> the US began rethinking about the future of the Shah and Washington's relations with him, if not Iran. Shah's biographer Gholam Reza Afkhami has documented: "Given the shah's prestige—and his money—in late 1974 and early 1975 Ford and Kissinger decided to accommodate him on his nuclear policies, though they remained uncertain about his ultimate goals."<sup>45</sup> In this context, in 1975 the US refused to sell nuclear reactors to Iran. But the Shah had placed the orders with France. Later President Ford also signed a directive in 1976 offering Iran a US-built processing facility for extracting plutonium from nuclear reactor fuel perhaps in the hope of controlling Shah's behavior regarding nuclear programme.

However, the US offer did not satisfy the Shah. He sought help from other countries for Iran's nuclear programme some of whom were considered US enemies (for example, Communist China). Under the circumstance, President Carter to send a message to the Shah stating: "All nations must

share in the responsibility to bring the benefits of nuclear science and technology to mankind within a framework which assures that its destructive potential is never unleashed.”<sup>46</sup> It was under such circumstance, the first director of AEOI Dr. Akbar Etemad had to go to Washington in 1977 to meet President Carter and to dispel the concerns of the US regarding the Shah’s real intention about the nuclear programme.<sup>47</sup> The US was not happy with the Shah’s decision to go with the nuclear programme. At the same time the US did not want to see nuclear weapons in the hands of Shah, now an unpredictable ruler of Iran. For that Washington began to show its strong displeasure with the Shah’s nuclear programme.

**(k) Shah’s Oil Policy Caused a Major Rift between Tehran and Washington**

A major friction existed between Iran and the US over the Shah’s oil policy since the early 1970s. This friction intensified when he took control of Iran’s oil in 1973 and constantly advocated for increasing the price of oil for Iran’s development programmes.<sup>48</sup> Due to the Shah’s role prices of oil began to rise steadily at a time when Western demand for oil rapidly grew. The Shah’s continuous pressure for higher oil prices changed the whole pattern of Iran-US relations in the 1970s, leaving a negative legacy on Washington’s attitude towards the Shah.<sup>49</sup> Prior to this oil price increase during the Organization of Petroleum Exporting Countries (hereinafter OPEC)<sup>50</sup> Twenty-Second Conference in Tehran on February 14, 1971, President Nixon dispatched his Under-Secretary of State to Tehran and Riyadh to assess the situation, and see if the US could mediate in any way. The Shah disparagingly turned down the offer of any mediation from US and warned the West against exerting any pressure on Iran in support of their oil companies.<sup>51</sup> Nixon did not react partly because of his close personal relations with the Shah and partly because he needed an ally in the Middle East at a time when the Middle East was not peaceful since Libya went under a revolution only two years back led by anti-West Muammar al-Qaddafi.

In this background, on the tenth anniversary of the White Revolution in January 1973, the Shah announced that the NIOC would take over all the operations and ownership of the Western oil consortium operating in Iran.<sup>52</sup> Contrarily, President Richard Nixon urged the Shah to reconsider the nationalization move, but to no avail.<sup>53</sup> Rather, after the nationalization move, the Shah accelerated the oil-price politics in the OPEC. Meanwhile, on October 6, 1973, when Arab-Israeli war began, the Organization of Arab Petroleum Exporting Countries (OAPEC) announced an embargo on oil sales to the US and Israel. True, the Shah’s refusal to join in the oil embargo had earned him reputation as a close and tested friend of US, however, Tehran’s assurance to the OAPEC that it would do nothing that could undermine their embargo measures in no way appeared welcoming gesture to policy makers in Washington. As a result, the Shah began to be identified as a detested statesman in the eyes of the Americans.<sup>54</sup> Meantime, when the Arab oil

embargo was badly affecting US economy, the Shah was seen active to advocate the price rise of oil. Under the circumstance, President Nixon wrote a personal note to the Shah requesting to reconsider the decision given the global facts: the war and the Arab oil embargo. The Shah dismissed the request.<sup>55</sup> It was under the circumstance, US trade administrator and Treasury Secretary William Bill Simon described Iran's monarch as "a nut".<sup>56</sup> Given such behavior of the Shah, the US government took Shah's policy on oil very negatively and concluded the price increases of 1973 were very destabilizing.

Meantime, the Shah flatly rejected two suggestions by US Treasury Secretary George Schultz and President Gerald Ford in January and October 1974, respectively, that Iran, along with other OPEC members, should reduce its oil prices by about 50% so that the world economy could avoid a major disaster.<sup>57</sup> There is no doubt that the Shah was the pivot in the price hike in 1971, 1973 and the 1974 OPEC Conference in Vienna. Barry Rubin has categorically pointed out that Iran's participation in the recurring rounds of OPEC price increases had angered many Americans.<sup>58</sup> Basically, the Shah took the lead in the oil price at a time when the dependence of US and its allies took a new turn on Middle Eastern oil.<sup>59</sup> Hence, the US was so fed up with the Shah's increased oil price that at one point President Ford publicly called for a reduction in oil prices in September 1974. In response, the Shah fired back and said: "No one can dictate to us. No one can wave a finger at us, because we will wave a finger back."<sup>60</sup> The US government viewed this Shah's position very negatively and moved to contain the Shah by highlighting the abuse of human rights in Iran (see below) on the one hand, and by encouraging Washington's another oil-rich ally Saudi Arabia to stand against Shah's oil price policy.<sup>61</sup>

Then President Ford wrote to the Shah on September 9, 1975, and requested him to back the reduction of oil prices in view of significant future negative impact on the economies of all the oil importing nations. The Shah's response was immediate and stern. On September 11, 1975, the Shah sharply responded to the President Ford. Threatening the President that the OPEC decision to continue the freeze of oil price would not continue after September 1975, he concluded: "I also appreciate very much and greatly value the special relationship that exists between our two countries which as you fully recognize, Mr. President, is not only in favor of Iran but is mutually and equally beneficial to both sides. If in defending our legitimate interests, we might raise serious questions among the American people we would be very sorry to ascertain that the real facts have not been set before your public."<sup>62</sup> In this way, Shah's tone assumed an authority it had not possessed before and sounded contrary to US interests. To Shah's biographer, this was a tough-minded turning of the table, with the Shah now telling the US President how to deal with the

problem of the price hike in oil in the US.<sup>63</sup> While John D. Stempel has concluded that the Shah felt strong enough to break with the US on a major issue (oil).<sup>64</sup>

Against this backdrop, a Presidential Memorandum was prepared on February 16, 1976 which clearly stated that:

US relations with Iran have suffered some strains in recent months because of our inability to help Iran in two important inter-related areas --escalating costs of US arms and insufficient oil revenues to meet these and the overall costs of Iran's ambitious military modernization program. More generally, the Shah remains concerned about the reliability of the US commitment *to* its friends and allies around the world. In these circumstances, it is important that the Shah be reassured of our commitment to a sound and special relationship with Iran, despite periodic differences on some issues.<sup>65</sup>

It was in this context, Saudi King Faisal (1964-1975) strongly supported the Shah's oil price hike policy and adopted a strong anti-Israeli policy believing that unless the Arab-Israeli problem were solved there would be more wars and revolutions and thus he became increasingly convinced that he had to use the "oil weapon" to induce the US to put pressure on Israel and thus end the political stalemate.<sup>66</sup> This actually paved the way for the king's own end. It is a commonly-held belief in Saudi Arabia, and the wider Arab world that King Faisal's oil boycott in 1973 and his strong anti-Israeli policy as well as the fear of Faisal's future role in oil price increase with Iran's Shah in the upcoming OPEC summit in Doha in December 1976 were real causes of his assassination in 1975 via a Western conspiracy.<sup>67</sup> The murder of King Faisal relieved the US of oil stress to a great extent. Because the new Saudi King Khalid (1975-1982) and his foreign policy team stepped in to occupy Iran's former place in the US and quickly moved to use Saudi oil power as strategic leverage in improving Saudi-US relations. They were determined to do everything they could to win the confidence of US policymakers and diplomats taking the advantage of Iran-US strained relations over oil issue.

At about the same time following King Faisal's assassination, a rumor believed to be spread by US-Israeli planners which said that Iran's Shah, who was angry at Saudi efforts to reduce oil price, might occupy Saudi Arabia and seize its oil assets (in eastern province of Hasa inhabited by Shia majority) in the event of any future political unrest in the Kingdom. After this the new Saudi King genuinely feared the Shah's intentions towards Saudi Arabia. The Saudi government, therefore, concluded that the only way to restrain Iran's military buildup was to reduce the Shah's ability to spend money freely by decreasing oil price and thus building close relations with the US. Although the Shah was puzzled by Saudi motives regarding reducing oil prices but his anger was directed at the US. Once he bluntly told his faithful Minister of the Imperial Court and confidante Asadollah

Alam that “Those bloody Americans.... They imagine they can get their own way, by manipulating the Saudis, and relying on their vast oil supplies.”<sup>68</sup>

Given such distance in Iran-US relations, President Ford wrote another letter to the Shah on October 29, 1976. In the letter Ford warned the Shah in the strongest possible terms of the consequences of raising oil prices again. Ford argued that higher oil prices could “add major strains to the international financial system” and tip the global economy back into recession. Ford then made it clear that he had lost patience with the Shah’s truculent attitude. Finally, he observed that “Iranian support for an OPEC decision to increase the price of oil at this time would play directly into the hands of those who have been attacking our relationship.” When the Presidential letter was delivered to the Shah on October 31, 1976 by US Ambassador Richard Helms the Shah reacted sharply and unhappily reiterating his earlier position with regard to oil price hike. With the victory of Jimmy Carter in the 1976 President Election the pattern of Iran-US strained relations over oil took new turn. What the Ford administration failed to do, the Carter administration succeeded. One scholar has put: “As soon as the Carter administration entered office, it downplayed the importance of US relations with Iran.”<sup>69</sup> Later on President Carter sided with officials who wanted to weaken the Shah and he set his policy in motion by distancing the US from the Shah.<sup>70</sup> Thus when a dangerous tipping point had been reached in Iran-US relations over oil price, Washington opted for distancing the Shah for the very reason that the Carter administration saw Saudi Arabia as the key to its energy and Middle East policies.<sup>71</sup> This US view of Saudi Arabia which was still advocating the creation of a Palestinian state alongside an independent Israel largely helped it to find in Saudi Arabia a new oil partner instead of Iran. Thus the “special relationship” between Tehran and Washington had reached the brink over oil price issue.<sup>72</sup>

#### **(I) SAVAK’s Presence and Activities in the US**

Tehran-Washington relationship was further strained because of SAVAK’s presence and its activities in the US. In January 1969, President Richard Nixon allowed the Iranian secret policy—SAVAK to operate inside the US to collect information about Iranian expatriates opposed to the Shah’s regime in return for establishing some CIA’s listening posts in Iran along the border with Soviet Union. Since then 15 to 20 SAVAK officials operated from Iranian consulates throughout the US, engaging 50 to 100 full-time informers, and many more part-timers. The Shah’s concern was that Iranian students in the US numbered around 60,000 might instigate anti-Shah sentiment in the country. The SAVAK officials and their agents in the US used to thwart the anti-Shah planning. So far as the Shah remained loyal to his patron—the US, SAVAK’s presence and activities in the US never became a point of contention in Iran-US relations. However, since

the early 1970s when the Shah began to act independently in matters of domestic and foreign policy including oil issue, Palestine issue, and nuclear programme as examined above, the US government began to raise question about SAVAK's presence and activities in the US. Besides, from the US perspective, SAVAK's presence in the US became a question of sovereignty and according to the FBI, SAVAK activities violated US sovereignty.<sup>73</sup> As a result, just a few weeks after Carter's inaugural when Americans' favorite television show, *60 Minutes*, ran an expose on SAVAK agents brazenly operating against Iranian dissidents inside the US,<sup>74</sup> President Carter under whom the Shah of Iran did no longer expect the relationship with the Carter administration as Tehran enjoyed before, let alone the continuation of SAVAK's presence and its activities in the US, took the issue seriously and decisively moved to stop SAVAK's presence in the US forever. Since Carter did not like the Shah and his repressive regime he put an end to the presence of agents of SAVAK and their activities in the US. Resultantly, anti-Shah activities and demonstrations in the US got momentum in the US.<sup>75</sup> This in turn deteriorated the already strained Iran-US relations.

**(m) Shah's Spending Money for Ford's Re-election**

The damaging thing happened to the ongoing Iran-US relations when the Shah himself preferred Gerald Ford's re-election in US Presidential Election of 1976.<sup>76</sup> The Shah saw that during the Election campaign Democrat Presidential Candidate Jimmy Carter had spoken out against him. Therefore, before the election, the Shah had made clear his pro-Republican sympathies. Not only that the Shah contributed several million dollars to the Ford campaign against the Democrat Presidential Candidate Jimmy Carter although during the election he said that the election result 'would not have the slightest effect on Iran-American relations'.<sup>77</sup> Despite this pronouncement, the Shah privately was deeply concerned about Carter's victory and he was reported to have observed that 'it looks like we are not going to be around much longer'. In the end, when Carter won the election and became President the Shah became seriously nervous. Shah's concerned reached to the apex when after Carter's election the Shah sent him a cable of congratulation to which Carter never formally replied.<sup>78</sup> The Shah discovered why President Carter did not answer him. On July 18, 1977, his SAVAK reported that President Carter and other US officials were furious about the Iranian government's contribution to the Ford campaign. One of Shah's generals made the same point and wrote that Shah's spending money for Carter's opponent did dissatisfy and anger Carter and his fellow democrats.<sup>79</sup> This anger reflected when Iranians waged revolution against the Shah, the Carter administration falsely and outwardly encouraged the Shah to resist the uprising and promised support while behind the scene it was working to doom the Shah's regime.

**(n) Shah's Independent Foreign Policy and His International Posture Incurred Huge US Anger**

Since the Shah's return to power in 1953 with the CIA's assistance the Shah adopted such foreign policy priorities and objectives that they pleased the US as he gave priority to US interests in conducting his country's foreign and economic policies. Since then the Shah maintained his credentials as its most trusted ally in the Persian Gulf region. However, after a decade and half the Shah began to pursue an independent foreign policy of Iran. The Shah also intensified his efforts to eradicate the image of subservience to the US and to play the role of a truly independent-minded world leader in the mold of the French President General de Gaulle. He expanded Iran's trade and military relations with West Germany, Japan, Britain, France, Italy and even the Soviet bloc and China.<sup>80</sup> His many trips to Europe, as well as frequent visits to Tehran by Western dignitaries, businessmen, pundits, public relations specialists politicians from the Soviet bloc and China helped strengthen the Shah's international links and increase and sustain his vaunted stature as a world leader.

Documents of evidence show that the US government was very worried about the consequences of the Shah's increasing independence in the international arena.<sup>81</sup> Since 1970 Iran renewed relations with Cairo, then Israel's potential enemy. Tehran improved ties with Pakistan, India and Afghanistan. Tehran settled territorial dispute with Saudi Arabia, including the prickly question of offshore boundaries. Tehran under the Shah entertained Arab rulers on hunting trips and invited them to tour Iran. He gave economic assistance to some of the poorer sheikhdoms who began to work closely with Iran in common efforts to raise petroleum prices.<sup>82</sup> The Shah's former patron—the US saw all these doubtfully. Much dismay to the US, since 1966, its client—the Shah began a flurry of commercial agreement activity with the communist countries of Eastern Europe including Rumania, Yugoslavia, Bulgaria, Hungary, and Poland. To cement the commercial ties between Iran and these countries the Shah visited those countries while return visits to Tehran were made by the leaders of those countries. Through these means, the Shah let the US to know that he was not to be taken for granted.<sup>83</sup> According to an analyst, Iran-US diplomatic interchanges from 1967 to 1975 show the two countries often disagreed within their basic relationship of shared mutual interests.<sup>84</sup> In fact, this trend of Iran-US relations continued till 1979. This trend of Shah's independent attitude in foreign policy not only offended the US but also made him a potential enemy if not a threat to US interests in the region. Therefore, the attitudinal change of the Shah in dealing with Iran's foreign policy thus transformed him from a client to super-client partner to a villain in the eyes of the policymakers in Washington.

**(o) Iran's Human Rights Issue**

The final issue that caused much strain on Iran-US relations was human rights issue propagated from Washington. Since his reinstatement in 1953 the Shah with direct US assistance established a reign of terror by suppressing all political and religious opponents whom he used to call “black” (Ulamas or Islamic clergy) and “red” (communists) reactionaries. From the time of his reinstatement and especially after the creation of CIA-FBI-MOSSAD-trained SAVAK the Shah's regime committed heinous crime of suppressing public opinions and press, torturing, imprisoning and brutally killing thousands of Iranian political dissidents. The US governments never criticized the Shah's regime for that; rather they praised the client for silencing the opposition to his rule. However, in a changed perspective of client-patron relationship when the client (the Shah) turned into a super-client partner and started to act independently, when he appeared critical to Israel, when he showed his strong willingness to step up nuclear programme, when he proved his determination to go with his own oil policy ignoring Washington's repeated requests to support reduction of oil price, only then the human rights issue caused fury and rage in the mind of the patron-partner—the US. Several critics in the US became more outspoken and critical about the lack of political reform under the Shah and the alleged human rights abuses of SAVAK. Although savagery of SAVAK was a regular feature since 1957, since mid-1975 persistent reports of SAVAK's brutality towards the regime's real and suspected opponents—confirmed by Amnesty International, the International Commission of Jurists, and the International Commission of the Red Cross—began to tarnish the Shah's image in the US.<sup>85</sup> The Shah became much concerned as US media began to take a hand that only increased Shah's fear that the US was working against him for his recent policy towards oil and Israel. An observer has reported that on the eve of the Islamic Revolution the Shah himself in a private conversation with a US human rights lawyer argued that the Western press was Jewish controlled and that was why it had taken him to task over SAVAK as soon as he had begun to side with the Palestinians.<sup>86</sup>

My study suggests that one of US goals in placing stress on the Shah regarding human rights violation was to get him as a moderate statesman about his oil and Israeli policy. Of course, mindful of strategic significance of Iran, particularly for the security of the Persian Gulf and the Strait of Hormuz, US showed a balanced reaction to Iranian human rights violation issue, and did not go further with the issue in public. This was evidenced when President Carter visited Tehran in December 1977 and tactfully avoided the temptation of preaching human rights to Iran “stridently” and preferred to resort to quiet diplomacy.<sup>87</sup> Why was such US policy, is now a question to be answered? This time the Carter administration toned down its anti-Shah rhetoric because it was seriously working for a peace settlement between Israel and Egypt and it was in the midst of the mission. The Carter administration ardently wanted the Shah to support his personal friend Sadat



in this regard and continue providing oil to Israel (which was normal case in Iran-US relations) in face of strong Arab opposition during the peace negotiation period. Once the Carter administration achieved the breakthrough in the Camp David in September 1978, it returned to its original policy of viewing critically the Shah's regime<sup>88</sup> which added much strain to the already fragile Iran-US relations.

### **How Far Were Iran-US Strained Relations Responsible for the Shah's Downfall?**

The study of this section undoubtedly reveals the fact that Iran-US strained relationship was a common phenomenon since 1953 and this type of Iran-US relationship impacted prevailing overall Iran-US relations very negatively. The pertinent question here is: how far were Iran-US strained relations responsible for the downfall of the Shah? There is no denying that since his restoration to the throne in 1953 through a CIA-engineered coup d'état the Shah played an active role of a loyal client. Over time, he assumed the role of a super-client to an equal partner of the US in the Persian Gulf area. By the mid-1970s it became clear to the US government that the Shah was no longer playing a partner's role and it had no control over the Shah. The transformation of the Shah from an entirely dependent monarch of the 1953-1968 period to a large degree an independent megalomaniac ruler of Iran in the 1970s with an independent foreign policy created distance between Tehran and Washington. Moreover, as just examined, the Shah's policy toward Israel since 1974 and in this context his nuclear ambition, and his advocacy for oil price-hike throughout the 1970s caused immense and irreparable damage to the existing Iran-US close relations. Though the Shah retained his links to the US and even expanded during the Nixon administration and the Ford administration largely because of his personal affinity for President Nixon and Secretary of State Henry Kissinger, US influence was clearly on the wane.<sup>89</sup> Again, although in spite of such damage to the Iran-US relations the Shah never thought of breaking off its ties with US, however, it was the US that adopted the policy of abandoning the Shah quietly when Saudi Arabia had eclipsed Iran as America's most loyal ally in the Gulf.<sup>90</sup> In this way when the Shah's oil price rise put him at odds with the US, the US abandonment of the Shah was complete. The US abandonment of the Shah was becoming more and more clear as the Iranians went for a revolution against the Shah.<sup>91</sup>

It was during the revolutionary period many US officials believed that by helping the opposition come to power, the US would protect its interests in the post-Shah Iran. Many in the Carter administration including Vice-President Mondale were also seen to develop contacts with the Iranian opposition in the US considering the Shah was "a highly illegitimate ruler."<sup>92</sup> While Henry Precht held out hope that moderate pro-democracy, secular elements could—and should—replace the Shah.<sup>93</sup> US support for the opposition demonstrated during Secretary of State Cyrus Vance's

trip to Tehran in May 1977 when he asked the Shah to address his human rights record in Iran. To some, after his meeting with Vance, the Shah was ‘more insecure in his relations with the Americans than ever’ since by then the US was maintaining contacts with the opposition and dissidents as part of US policy of distancing the Shah. Moreover, Vance leaked word to the National Front that the Shah was told to ‘liberalize or be removed’. In this way, the Carter administration began to distance the Shah. The then British Ambassador to Iran Sir Anthony Parsons has argued that the Carter administration’s policy of distancing the US from the Shah encouraged his opponents to redouble their anti-Shah activities.<sup>94</sup> Reportedly, what impressed President Carter in reducing US support for the Shah was that the oppositional groups in Iran chiefly the National Front who had voiced for the support of Israel, and it was prepared to maintain Iran’s close relations with the US, if it abandoned the Shah. After having such assurance from the National Front the Carter administration made a conclusive decision to throw the Shah like a spent force.

### **Conclusion**

The history of Iran-US relations examined in this section clearly shows that apart from the client-patron and special-partnership relations, there were also strained relations between Iran and the US during the 1953-1979 period. The Shah’s attitudes and policies regarding the oil price, Israel, Palestine issue, nuclear programme, military build-up and US fear of possible Iranian regional hegemony in true sense of the term were apparently a major consideration in Iran-US strained relations. Indications made by the Shah were clear that he was “tired of being treated as a schoolboy.” Therefore, sometimes either in a bluffing fashion or in a genuine manner, he even hinted that Iran and the US were very near the end of their relationship,<sup>95</sup> although he never thought of breaking Iran-US relations or putting an end to Iran’s close relations with the US. However, it was the US that decided to end its relations with the Shah if not Iran. Arguably, since 1948 the US goals in the Middle East were to prevent the spread of Communism, to ensure security to Israel, and to maintain the normal flow of Persian Gulf’s oil with a tolerable price in the oil market and the US had been working to that end with its allies in the region including the Shah. When the Shah’s policy towards the Soviet Union from the late 1960s, his policy towards oil since the early 1970s and his policy towards Israel since the mid-1970s posed a grave challenge to US goals and interests, the clandestinely began distancing the Shah. This US policy of distancing the Shah or abandoning the unpredictable and temperamental Shah hastened his downfall in 1979 during the Islamic Revolution. Thus Iran-US strained relations outweighed the Iran-US close relations of 1953-1979.

Notes and References of Section IV of Chapter 3

1. Rouhollah K. Ramazani, *Iran's Foreign Policy, 1941-1973: ... , op., cit.*, p. 262.
2. R. K. Ramazani, 'Who Lost America? The Case of Iran', *op., cit.*, pp. 10-11. See also Ramazani's *Iran's Foreign Policy, 1941-1973: ... , op., cit.*, p. 262.
3. Barry Rubin, *Paved with Good Intentions: ... , op., cit.*, pp. 96-97, 115.
4. James A. Bill, *The Eagle and the Lion: ... , op., cit.*, p. 170.
5. Gholam Reza Afkhami, *The Life and Times of the Shah, op., cit.*, p. 213. Hossein Fardoust, *The Rise and Fall of Pahlavi Dynasty: ... , op., cit.*, pp. 273. See also: Mark J. Gasiorowski, 'The Qarani Affair and Iranian Politics', *International Journal of Middle East Studies*, vol. 25, No. 4, November, 1993, pp. 625-644.
6. Hossein Fardoust, *The Rise and Fall of Pahlavi Dynasty: ... , op., cit.*, p. 274.
7. Mark J. Gasiorowski, 'The Qarani Affair and Iranian Politics', *op., cit.*, p. 625. See also: Amin Saikal, *The Rise and Fall of the Shah: ... , op., cit.*, p. 76; Kenneth M. Pollack, *The Persian Puzzle: ... , op., cit.*, p. 79.
8. Babak Ganji, *Politics of Confrontation: ... , op., cit.*, p. 30.
9. April R. Summitt, *op., cit.*, p. 564.
10. James A. Bill, *The Eagle and the Lion: ... , op., cit.*, p. 137.
11. Hossein Fardoust, *The Rise and Fall of Pahlavi Dynasty: ... , op., cit.*, p. 227. See also: Amin Saikal, *The Rise and Fall of the Shah: ... , op., cit.*, pp. 71-96.
12. Shahram Chubin and Sephr Zabih, *The Foreign Relations of Iran: ... , op., cit.*, p. 103; Fakhreddin Azimi, *The Quest for Democracy in Iran: ... , op., cit.*, p. 186.
13. Quoted in Roby C. Barrett, *The Greater Middle East and the Cold War: ... , p. 34.*
14. John D. Stempel, *Inside the Iranian Revolution, op., cit.*, p. 67.
15. Stephen McGlinchey, 'Lyndon B. Johnson and Arms Credit Sales to Iran 1964-1968', *The Middle East Journal*, Vol. 67, No. 2, Spring 2013, p. 229; Kenneth M. Pollack, *The Persian Puzzle: ... , op., cit.*, p. 84.
16. The US government did not place any pressure on Iran as it was preoccupied in Southeast Asia, and apprehending Iran's resentment in the wake of Indo-Pakistan war of 1965 when US did not support Iran's regional ally Pakistan.
17. Shahram Chubin and Sephr Zabih, *The Foreign Relations of Iran: ... , op., cit.*, pp. 115-118.
18. Babak Ganji, *Politics of Confrontation: ... , op., cit.*, p. 26; Andrew Scott Cooper, *op., cit.*, p. 583.
19. Dilip Hiro, *Iran under the Ayatollahs, op., cit.*, p. 308; Andrew Scott Cooper, 'Showdown at Doha: The Secret Oil Deal That Helped Sink the Shah of Iran', *Middle East Journal*, Vol. 62, No. 4, Autumn 2008, p. 580.
20. Barry Rubin, *Paved with Good Intentions: ... , op., cit.*, pp. 172-173.
21. Peter Avery, *Modern Iran, op., cit.*, p. 491.
22. Robert Dreyfuss, *Hostage to Khomeini*, New Benjamin Franklin House Publishing Company, New York, 1981, p. 20.
23. Stephen McGlinchey, 'Lyndon B. Johnson and Arms Credit Sales to Iran 1964-1968', *The Middle East Journal*, Vol. 67, No. 2, Spring 2013, p. 237; Vali Nasr, 'Politics within the Late-Pahlavi State: The Ministry of Economy and Industrial Policy, 1963-69', *International Journal of Middle East Studies*, Vol. 32, No. 1, February, 2000, pp. 106-107.
24. Stephen McGlinchey, *op., cit.*, p. 247; Shahram Chubin and Sephr Zabih, *The Foreign Relations of Iran: ... , op., cit.*, p. 78. This was again demonstrated when the Shah visited Washington in July 1973 this was balanced by Iran's Prime Minister's visit to Moscow the following month.
25. Babak Ganji, *Politics of Confrontation: ... , op., cit.*, p. 12.
26. Barry Rubin, *Paved with Good Intentions: ... , op., cit.*, p. 155.
27. Saiyid Athar Abbas Rizvi, *Iran: ... , op., cit.*, p. 273.
28. See: Rouhollah K. Ramazani, *Iran's Foreign Policy, 1941-1973: ... , op., cit.*, p. 348.
29. Babak Ganji, *Politics of Confrontation: ... , op., cit.*, p. 7.
30. Parvin Merat Amini, 'A Single Party State in Iran, 1975-78: The Rastakhiz Party: The Final Attempt by the Shah to Consolidate His Political Base', *Middle Eastern Studies*, Vol. 38, No. 1, January, 2002, p. 163; Dilip Hiro, *Iran under the Ayatollahs, op., cit.*, p. 59; Saiyid Athar Abbas Rizvi, *Iran: ... , op., cit.*, pp. 273, 331.
31. Babak Ganji, *Politics of Confrontation: ... , op., cit.*, p. 13.
32. *Op., cit.*, p. 24.

33. Barry Rubin, *Paved with Good Intentions: ... , op., cit.*, p. 138.
34. Quoted in Donald Neff, 'The U.S., Iraq, Israel, and Iran: Backdrop to War', *Journal of Palestine Studies*, Vol. 20, No. 4, Summer, 1991, p. 27.
35. It was from that time on the US began finding an Arab ally to counter both Iraq and Iran which it found eventually in Sadat's Egypt.
36. Amin Saikal, *The Rise and Fall of the Shah: ... , op., cit.*, pp. 170-171.
37. *Op., cit.*, p. 96; Barry Rubin, *Paved with the Good Intentions: ... , op., cit.*, p. 116.
38. The crisis was sparked when the martial law regime of General Agha Mohammad Yahya Khan, who had come to power in Pakistan in a military coup in March 1969, held national and provincial elections in both East and West Pakistan in December 1970 in order to transfer power to civilian hands. In elections for the federal National Assembly, the Awami League, led by Sheikh Mujibur Rahman and representing the Bengalis of East Pakistan, achieved an absolute majority, defeating the Pakistan People's Party (PPP), which held seats only in West Pakistan. Negotiations between the Awami League and the PPP to form a government failed, and when the Pakistani army attempted to impose a military solution from March 25, 1971, by conducting genocide on the unarmed civilians, the war erupted. The war turned into an Indo-Pakistan war on November 21, 1971, when the Indian military intervened on the side of East Pakistan, leading to the surrender of Pakistan on December 16, 1971 and thus resulting in the emergence of independent Bangladesh.
39. Najib E. Saliba, 'Impact of the Indo-Pakistani War on the Middle East', *World Affairs*, Vol. 135, No. 2, Fall 1972, pp. 134-135.
40. Rouhollah K. Ramazani, *Iran's Foreign Policy, 1941-1973: ... , op., cit.*, p. 354.
41. Barry Rubin, *Paved with Good Intentions: ... , op., cit.*, p. 116; Shahram Chubin and Sephr Zabih, *The Foreign Relations of Iran: ... , op., cit.*, pp. 97, 108.
42. Merrill A. Rosenberg, 'Iran', *The American Jewish Year Book*, Vol. 75, 1974-75, p. 542; Trita Parsi, *Treacherous Alliance: ... , op., cit.*, pp. 30-31.
43. Gholam Reza Afkhami, *The Life and Times of the Shah, op., cit.*, p. 529; Amin Saikal, *The Rise and Fall of the Shah: ... , op., cit.*, p. 168; Saiyid Athar Abbas Rizvi, *Iran: ... , op., cit.*, p. 272.
44. Nader Entessar, 'Superpowers and Persian Gulf Security: The Iranian Perspective', *Third World Quarterly*, Vol. 10, No. 4, October, 1988, pp. 1432; George H. Quester, 'The Shah and the Bomb', *Policy Sciences*, Vol. 8, No. 1, March 1977, pp. 27-28.
45. Gholam Reza Afkhami, *The Life and Times of the Shah, op., cit.*, p. 352. See also: Saira Khan, *Iran and Nuclear Weapons: ... , op., cit.*, p. 48.
46. *Op., cit.*, p. 352.
47. Shireen T. Hunter, *Iran's Foreign Policy in the Post-Soviet Era: ... , op., cit.*, p. 64.
48. The Shah launched the Fourth Seven Year Development Plan (1968-1973) in 1968 and the Fifth Seven Year Development Plan (1973-1978) in 1973 under which he had started a "Big Push" theory of transforming Iran into an industrialized country.
49. Rouhollah K. Ramazani, *Iran's Foreign Policy, 1941-1973: ... , op., cit.*, p. 380; Fred Halliday, 'The Genesis of the Iranian Revolution', *Third World Quarterly*, Vol. 1, No. 4, October, 1979, p. 7; Steven A. Schneider, 'The Paper Tiger Starts to Roar: The Origins of the Energy Crisis', *Berkeley Journal of Sociology*, Vol. 20, 1975-76, pp. 17-18.
50. The OPEC was created at the Baghdad Conference on September 10-14, 1960.
51. Amin Saikal, *The Rise and Fall of the Shah: ... , op., cit.*, p. 114.
52. Dilip Hiro, *Iran under the Ayatollahs, op., cit.*, p. 59; Amin Saikal, *The Rise and Fall of the Shah: ... , op., cit.*, p. 118.
53. Dilip Hiro, *Iran under the Ayatollahs, op., cit.*, p. 308; Barry Rubin, *Paved with Good Intentions: ... , op., cit.*, p. 139.
54. R. K. Ramazani, 'Who Lost America? The Case of Iran', *op., cit.*, p. 11; Andrew Scott Cooper, *op., cit.*, p. 570; Amin Saikal, *The Rise and Fall of the Shah: ... , op., cit.*, p. 124.
55. Kenneth M. Pollack, *The Persian Puzzle: ... , op., cit.*, p. 107.
56. Andrew Scott Cooper, *op., cit.*, p. 571.
57. Amin Saikal, *The Rise and Fall of the Shah: ... , op., cit.*, p. 129.
58. Barry Rubin, *Paved with Good Intentions: ... , op., cit.*, p. 154.
59. See: William H. Sullivan, 'Dateline Iran: The Road Not Taken', *Foreign Policy*, No. 40, Tenth Anniversary, Autumn, 1980, p. 176.

60. "Shah Rejects Bid By Ford For Cut In Prices Of Oil," *The New York Times*, September 27, 1974, quoted in Andrew Scott Cooper, 'Showdown at Doha: The Secret Oil Deal That Helped Sink the Shah of Iran', *Middle East Journal*, Vol. 62, No. 4, Autumn 2008, p. 575.
61. Babak Ganji, *Politics of Confrontation: ... , op., cit.*, p. 20.
62. U.S. Department of State, Office of the Historian, Foreign Relations of the United States, 1969-1976, Vol. XXVII, Iran; Iraq, 1973-1976, Document 144, <https://history.state.gov/historicaldocuments/frus1969-76v27/d144> (Accessed on December 15, 2014)
63. Gholam Reza Afkhami, *The Life and the Times of the Shah, op., cit.*, p. 284.
64. John D. Stempel, *Inside the Iranian Revolution, op., cit.*, p. 8.
65. "Iran-The Shah (1)", Gerald R. Ford Presidential Library Document Box 2, available at: <http://www.fordlibrarymuseum.gov/library/document/0351/1555814.pdf>
66. Charles Issawi, 'The 1973 Oil Crisis and After', *Journal of Post Keynesian Economics*, Vol. 1, No. 2, Winter, 1978-1979, p. 12. For King Faisal's Israeli policy see: Madawi Al-Rasheed's *A History of Saudi Arabia*, Cambridge University Press, UK, 2002, p. 130.
67. For detail, see: Robert Dreyfuss, 'Discover plot against Saudi Arabia: Murder of Faisal tied to U.S.-based British intelligence network,' *Executive Intelligence Review (EIR)*, Vol. 5, no. 50, December 26, 1978, p. 45; Rouhollah K. Ramazani, *The Persian Gulf and the Strait of Hormuz, op., cit.*, p. 116.
68. Asadollah Alam, *The Shah and I: The Confidential Diary of Iran's Royal Court, 1969-1977* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1991), p. 434. Mentioned in Andrew Scott Cooper, *op., cit.*, p. 580.
69. Babak Ganji, *Politics of Confrontation: ... , op., cit.*, p. 17.
70. *Op., cit.*, p. 19.
71. *Op., cit.*, p. 40; R. K. Ramanzani, *The Persian Gulf and the Strait of Hormuz, op., cit.*, pp. 116-118.
72. Andrew Scott Cooper, *op., cit.*, p. 584; Raymond Hinnebusch, *The International Politics of the Middle East*, Manchester University Press, UK, 2003, p. 190.
73. Dilip Hiro, *Iran under the Ayatollahs, op., cit.*, p. 311.
74. David Farber, *Taken Hostage: The Iran Hostage Crisis and America's First Encounter with Radical Islam*, Princeton University Press, USA, 2005, p. 75.
75. One example was the demonstrations before the Shah while he was with President Carter outside the White House.
76. Barry Rubin, *Paved with Good Intentions: ... , op., cit.*, p. 188.
77. Babak Ganji, *Politics of Confrontation: ... , op., cit.*, p. 17.
78. *Op., cit.*, p. 19; Hossein Fardoust, *The Rise and Fall of Pahlavi Dynasty: ... , op., cit.*, p. 485.
79. Hossein Fardoust, *The Rise and Fall of Pahlavi Dynasty: ... , op., cit.*, p. 493.
80. Fakhreddin Azimi, *The Quest for Democracy in Iran: ... , op., cit.*, pp. 273-274.
81. Babak Ganji, *Politics of Confrontation: ... , op., cit.*, p. 1.
82. Barry Rubin, *Paved with Good Intentions: ... , op., cit.*, p. 127.
83. James A. Bill, *The Eagle and the Lion: ... , op., cit.*, p. 171.
84. John D. Stempel, *Inside the Iranian Revolution, op., cit.*, p. 7.
85. Dilip Hiro, *Iran under the Ayatollahs, op., cit.*, p. 310.
86. Ervand Abrahamian, *Khomeinism, op., cit.*, p. 128. See also: Alexander Moens, *op., cit.*, p. 214.
87. R. K. Ramanzani, *The Persian Gulf and the Strait of Hormuz, op., cit.*, pp. 118-119.
88. R. K. Ramazani, 'Who Lost America? The Case of Iran', *op., cit.*, p. 18.
89. John D. Stempel, *Inside the Iranian Revolution, op., cit.*, p. 21.
90. Andrew Scott Cooper, *op., cit.*, p. 591. Since Washington was in the process of developing new ties with Riyadh through the Doha summit, the free flow of Saudi oil to the West at tolerable prices became the primary US interest in the Peninsula which continues till today.
91. For more about the US policy of abandonment of the Shah see: Said Amir Arjomand, *The Turban for the Crown: ... , op., cit.*, pp. 128-132; M. Pahlavi, *Answer to History*, Scarborough Press, New York, 1982, pp. 145-155; Babak Ganji, *Politics of Confrontation: The Foreign Policy of the USA and Revolution in Iran*, Tauris Academic Studies, London, 2006; Frederick William Engdahl, *A Century of War, ... op., cit.*, pp. 171-172; Kenneth Pollack, *The Threatening Strom: The Case for Invading Iraq*, A Council on Foreign Relations Book, New York, 2002, pp. 20-29.
92. Babak Ganji, *Politics of Confrontation: ... , op., cit.*, pp. 6-7.
93. David Farber, *Taken Hostage: ... , op., cit.*, p. 95.
94. Babak Ganji, *Politics of Confrontation: ... , op., cit.*, p. 23-25.
95. James A. Bill, *The Eagle and the Lion: ... , op., cit.*, p. 170.

## Section V

### **Anti-Americanism, the Islamic Revolution of 1979 and the End of Iran-US Intimate Relations**

#### **Introduction**

Basically, the Iranian Islamic Revolution of 1979 was as much against the Shah as against his backer—the US. Eric Rouleau—the then chief Middle East correspondent and editorialist at the French newspaper *Le Monde*—has arguably stated that the 1978-1979 period witnessed a dual nature of Iranian uprising that was directed as much against “American imperialism” as against the despotism of the Shah, considered two sides of the same coin.<sup>1</sup> The reason was simple and crystal clear: in the eyes of the growing oppositional revolutionary forces during the 1977-1978 period, the Shah and the US were one.<sup>2</sup> During the 1953-1979 period when the US was the Shah’s main backer, Iranians saw Washington’s support for the Shah as support for corruption, limited sovereignty, and imposed social and economic changes in the name of modernization which in reality was nothing more than selling out to shallow US consumerism.<sup>3</sup> Given this reality, there is no escaping the fact that the Iran’s Islamic Revolution of 1979, which first toppled the US-backed Shah and then put an end to 26-year-long Iran-US close relations, came in the context of strong anti-Americanism.<sup>4</sup> In fact, anti-Americanism was central to the Iranian Islamic Revolution of 1979. Once the revolution broke out the flame of anti-Americanism flared up which engulfed the whole country and burned down the US-backed Shah’s throne in 1979. Historically, Iranian Islamic Revolution had its origin in an anti-Shah as well as anti-US movement back in 1953.<sup>5</sup> In the course of time, anti-US movement was crystallized as anti-Americanism. This anti-Americanism gathered momentum when the Shah from 1953 made Iran essentially economic, political, and cultural dependence on the US while US involvement in Iran formed a major basis of the Shah’s power so far as any opposition to him had to reckon with the US support for the regime.

In essence, the US intervention in Iranian politics, foreign affairs, economy and culture since 1953 subsequently resulted in anti-Americanism which doubled in intensity with time and eventually appeared as ‘the heartbeat of the revolution’.<sup>6</sup> An eminent scholar has put: “Iranians were anti-US in the sense of opposing the widespread and aggressive Americanization of Iran.”<sup>7</sup> By 1977, these expressions of hatred were so strong that Iranians were not only ready to confront both the Shah and the US, but also they successfully did it through a revolution and put an end to the Shah’s rule and with it the US interventions in Iran. This section traces and assesses how the US played a significant role in generating anti-American sentiment in Iran since 1953 which fueled the 1977-1978 protests from an increasingly broad spectrum of Iranian society, including

leftists, secularists as well as Islamists. Finally, the section examines how the Islamic Revolution of 1979 put an end to the Iran-US close relations and how it left pathological hatred against the US thus affecting subsequent history of Iran-US relations that began since 1979. For our own facilitation the whole discussion of this section is divided into following six main points:

- (a) US Political Intervention in Iran**
- (b) US Economic Intervention**
- (c) US Socio-Cultural Interference**
- (d) Imam Ayatullah Khomeini and the New Turn of Anti- Americanism**
- (e) The Revolution, US Policy and the End of Iran-US Intimate Relations**

**(a) US Political Intervention in Iran**

The history of US political intervention in Iran: both in domestic and in foreign affairs, started from the 1953 coup d'état when the US government with the help of its intelligence—the CIA successfully ousted Iran's democratically elected nationalist Prime Minister Dr. Mohammad Mosaddeq and restored pro-Western Mohammad Reza Shah to power. The US intervention in Iranian politics thus placed the Iranians in direct troubling position with the US. The CIA's intervention marked the end of a century plus of passive US involvement in Iran and the beginning of a new era of extensive US support for one-man autocratic, anti-democratic and repressive rule of the Shah instead of representative form of government. In a dynamic sense, from the very first day of the Shah's restoration to power, there began the "US era" in Iran and so did begin anti-American feeling in the country. Regarding how anti-American sentiment grew in Iran following the 1953 coup d'état distinguished Iran scholar James A. Bill in his seminal work on American-Iranian relations has observed:

The large reservoir of goodwill for America in Iran began to dry up in the 1950s. After playing a direct, dramatic role in the overthrow of Muhammad Mosaddiq, the United States joined the British in championing an oil agreement that was very coolly received by most Iranians. Then the United States moved in behind the new government of Iran with unprecedented amounts of economic and military aid... As the decade continued, the United States began to take the place of the British in the eyes of Iranian nationalists. Now, America was considered to be the primary external force rearranging the Iranian political landscape.<sup>8</sup>

With Washington's direct backing, the Shah led an extremely repressive regime—a 'reign of terror' and established a royal dictatorship<sup>9</sup> during the years between 1953 and 1979. The creation of CIA-MOSSAD-trained-and-supported SAVAK—the 'police-state monster' in 1957 helped a lot to the establishment of this 'reign of terror'.<sup>10</sup> Nikki R. Keddie, an American specialist on Iran, has asserted that although the aid to SAVAK from the CIA, FBI and MOSSAD assured some degree of efficiency, it only added to feelings against the US.<sup>11</sup> Because

throughout the period 1953-1978, the CIA-trained Shah's SAVAK personnel, who were trained in advanced torture techniques by Israel's MOSSAD and the CIA at Langley in West Virginia, had effectively penetrated deeply all segments and institutions of Iranian society, and it was given carte blanche to subdue ruthlessly even the slightest expression of disagreement with and opposition to the Shah's regime. Kenneth M. Pollack has related that "people disappeared from their homes, there were no trials and no respect for human rights, executions were commonplace, and the methods of torture practiced in Tehran's Evin Prison were every bit as sadistic and horrific as those developed at the Lubkanka (KGB's headquarters and affiliated prison) or Abu Ghraib."<sup>12</sup> Iranians blamed the US for such mournful situation of their human rights.<sup>13</sup> Washington saw Shah's repression through the lens of communist threat and it not only overlooked this persecution on the Shah's opponents and critics mainly from the National Front and Tudeh, it also openly supported the Shah in word and deed when he was conducting such genocide in cold blood.<sup>14</sup> This only accelerated and deepened anti-Americanism and then took the form of a fathomless ocean in Iran as the Shah had the complete support of the US in instituting all forms of repressive (physical and mental) policy.<sup>15</sup>

Meanwhile, in 1963, the *Hizb-i-Milliyun* or National Party which had been formed as the government party along with the opposition party—the *Mardom* or People's Party in 1957 was replaced by *Hizb-I Irani-Novin* meaning New Iran Party. These two puppet official parties, known popularly as the "Yes" and the "Yes, Sir" or "Yes, of Course" parties, were seen to be functioned as the tools of the Shah till 1975. On March 2, 1975, citing security reasons, the Shah effectively banned the two-party system in Iran and declared the formation of the single *Hezb-e Rastakhiz* or Resurgence Party through which he ruled with even greater authority. The creation of a single political party effectively turned Iran into a totalitarian state. The Iranians placed blames on the US for such political behavior of the Shah. They also noticed that US political interference in Iran continued unchecked when the US government induced the Shah's regime to grant diplomatic immunity to US military personnel and their dependents in the name of SOFA in return for a \$200 million loan. Therefore, an important component of anti-Americanism in Iran was the granting of SOFA on October 13, 1964 by the Shah's government (as mentioned above). Scholars of different persuasions are in agreement that the Iranian reaction to the SOFA of 1964 was the explosive anti-Americanism in Iran. The Iranians rightfully labeled the Shah as a dictator and stooge of the US, acting against the interests of the Iranian people. They were furious and they termed that the Shah had seemingly sold Iran's sovereignty to the US for \$200 million worth of weapons. Eminent scholar R. K. Ramazani told his own experience in the similar fashion. During his visit in Iran after half a decade later following the granting of SOFA, politically aware Iranians told him that ordinary American citizens were enjoying the benefits of the SOFA referring to them as American dependents of military personnel. This was humiliating



for a nation that still despised the memories of “capitulations” first imposed by Czarist Russia after its ignominious defeat of Iran in the war of 1826-1828 and abolished by Reza Shah a century later. As a consequence, anti-American feeling grew into a hurricane over this granting of SOFA to the US which first swept Iran’s Prime Minister Hasan Ali Mansur who had been killed on January 25, 1965 by a member of the Fedayin-e Islam for he was “widely regarded as being an American nominee” and who assured the Americans in advance of smoothly passage and ratification of the SOFA and favored it in the Majlis.<sup>16</sup>

The fire of anti-Americanism also engulfed the Americans living in Iran. Since the US was the powerhouse of the Shah and his political, economic and cultural behavior, his demon—SAVAK, and his repressive regime, Americans and American military presence in Iran became the principal targets of the underground forces of opposition to the Shah’s regime since early 1970s. Between 1971 and 1975, a total of 31 incidents of killings, kidnappings, bombings and threats of bombing took place which terrorized the other Americans in Iran. It is also reported that between 1972 and 1976 four US military officers were assassinated. Later on, when the anti-Shah revolution shook the whole country since late 1977, anti-Americanism quickly rose to zenith and the Americans in Iran were increasingly subject to surveillance, harassment, and physical attack and by late November 1978, such incidents of anti-Americanism had increased significantly.<sup>17</sup> Majority Iranians also resented the last US Ambassadors in Iran who were men of military and security or CIA background (for example, Richard Helms who first served as the Director of the CIA later was appointed the US Ambassador to Iran) and who had strong pro-Shah proclivities.

A final factor in the growth of anti-Americanism within the political spectrum in Iran since the 1953 coup d’état was US interference in Iran’s foreign policy. In effect, the US influenced and to some extent controlled Iran’s foreign policy under the Shah. Scholars agree that following the CIA-assisted 1953 coup d’état, the Shah and US foreign policy had become identical as during the 1953-1979 period Iran’s ‘foreign policy was designed to serve the American global strategy of anti-Communism.’<sup>18</sup> The political affiliation of the Shah’s regime to the US became so extensive that upon request by the US government, the Shah first allowed the CIA to monitor the Soviet missile activities and the activities of other Middle Eastern countries. Then he developed close diplomatic and economic relationship with Washington’s important ally in the Middle East—Israel and apartheid nation South Africa. The Shah also allowed Israel to open its Embassy in Tehran, only Israeli Embassy in the Muslim Middle East. Additionally, he provided Israel with Iran’s oil as mentioned in section II. These all the Shah did disregarding the anti-Israeli feelings of the Iranian Muslims in general and the Arab and non-Arab Muslims in particular. Fred Halliday is of the view that Iran’s covert support for Israel, and its hostility to the Palestinian Liberation Movement, were unpopular, and the Shah’s closeness to the US caused him to be dubbed as the ‘dog’ of Johnson, Nixon and Carter, whoever it was in office in Washington.<sup>19</sup>

**(b) US Economic Intervention**

While the US had a major interest in Iran's political stability, it found in Iran its economic vitality (see also chapter 6) following the 1953 coup d'état. The Iranians closely noticed that like a giant octopus the US spread its tentacles all over their economic sectors including oil, agriculture, investment, industry, and banks. However, this US economic intervention in Iran's economy had both positive as well as negative effects. The negative effects of the US economic intervention in Iran resulted in strong anti-Americanism which demonstrated in many ways.

**Firstly**, the initial US intervention in post-coup Iranian economy came with the 1954 oil settlement clearly to the disadvantage of Iran. The Shah in his *Mission for My Country* has asserted that after the coup d'état Iran saw that the 50-50 split had outlived its usefulness and was out of tune with Iranian nationalist aspirations. Therefore, Iran moved to improve its share in the new agreement that was to be settled with international oil cartels. Reportedly, the then US Ambassador in Tehran tried to discourage Iran from entering into such kind of agreement that would give Iran more than fifty percent profit.<sup>20</sup> This assertion of the Shah clearly demonstrates that he was not pleased with the 1954 oil settlement. The US-led 1954 oil agreement also inflamed the Iranian nationalists since the US first removed their nationalist Prime Minister Mosaddeq just because of his nationalization of Iran's oil industry, and then Washington took control of the oil industry by ensuring 40% of share in it largely at the political and economic cost of Iranians and their country. What appeared like adding salt to injury to the Iranians when Iran was given permission to use the name of NIOC or *National Iranian Oil Company* in place of AIOC, but when the consortium took over the oil industry Iran had little say in its management and the country was to receive 50% of the net profit of the consortium. What generated increasingly rising anti-Americanism was that following the imposition of the 1954 oil agreement the oil companies of the US along with Britain looted Iran by stripping from its all rights concerning the production and marketing of its petroleum, by obligating the bankrupt Iranian treasury to pay large sums in compensation to the AIOC, and by making Iran dependent upon the "goodwill" of the Anglo-US oil companies for future revenues. Analysts view that this system not only enhanced the controlling power of the US companies within the consortium and, for that matter, over the Iranian oil industry, but also enabled the consortium to make the real decisions on Iran's economic growth.<sup>21</sup> Naturally, the Iranians resented the US-dictated oil agreement and their resentment grew into anti-Americanism over US economic (oil) exploitation.

**Secondly**, as we have noticed the US government provided economic aid to Iran consisting of loans and grants in the amount of \$127.3 million in the wake of the 1953 coup so that Iran's new government would be able to use this aid to finance its operations and rehabilitate the stalled economy. In fact, the Iranian government needed money to keep the wheels of Iran's economy

moving and it turned to the US. But the US government agreed to provide Iran the economic aid on November 2, 1954, only after the ratification of the International Oil Consortium on October 21, 1954.<sup>22</sup> Iranians clearly understood that the US made the Iranian government a hostage to Washington's economic interests. This US position on providing economic aid to Iran generated anti-American feelings to a considerable degree among the Iranians.

**Thirdly**, following the post-coup oil settlement and the establishment of an international oil consortium, the Iranian government had to agree to pay \$70 million (£25 million) in ten-year installments as compensation to the former AIOC, long hated by the Iranians. What appeared more humiliating and insulting to the Iranians was that the AIOC was to receive this compensation for the nationalization of their own assets during Mosaddeq's premiership. Since the US played the key role in settling all issues of the consortium, Iranians blamed the US for their humiliation and insult and they directed their anger towards the US.

**Fourthly**, Iranians saw first-hand how the Shah handsomely rewarded CIA men who played important role in his restoration to power in 1953. Many of them had been granted the monopoly on importing various commodities, from wheat and sugar to consumer goods. While high officials like US Secretary of State John Foster Dulles, his brother and CIA Director John Allen Dulles and Ambassador Loy Henderson were known to have each received \$ 1 million payments from the Pahlavi Foundation in February, 1962. These were the only payments for which there is documentary evidence (see also Appendices).<sup>23</sup> Shah also spent money indiscriminately for promoting his image and regime as progressive. For that he used US media outlets and a host of US public relations organizations and personalities. For example, the New York advertizing agency of Ruder & Finn received \$507,000 contract to promote Iran's image in the global arena under the Shah. One of the agency's executives, Marion Javits, wife of the New York senator Jacob Javits who was a Foreign Relations Committee member (who following the Islamic Revolution successfully advocated for passage of May Resolution which condemned revolutionaries for executing political dissidents, mainly the ex-Shah's associates see chapter 4), was paid \$67,500 a year to conduct a pro-Iran information campaign.<sup>24</sup> Former Under Secretary of State, William Rogers, was appointed as the lawyer for the American operations of the Pahlavi Foundation which since 1958 as a charity organization rewarded those Americans who contributed consolidating, guiding, and assisting the Shah's regime. The Shah appointed his son-in-law and son of General Fazlullah Zahedi by the name of Ardeshir Zahedi the Ambassador to Washington who was instructed to fortify Tehran-Washington relations. He used to spend lavishly Iranian money by arranging lavish parties, giving generous gifts to political and media luminaries.<sup>25</sup>

**Fifthly**, after the US-prescribed and the Shah initiated “White Revolution” there has been tremendous publicity of the “White Revolution” both in Iran and in the US, although with the exception of the land reform programmes and the literacy corps (and to a lesser extent the health corps), the other programs do little more than exist on paper. Yet the programme was fully supported by the US for two reasons: a) it would help stabilize the internal political situation in Iran and solidify the power of its ally in the region, the Shah; b) and it would prepare the way for capitalist-oriented development which in turn would broaden the investment possibilities for American corporations.<sup>26</sup> Iranians resented at both the White Revolution and the large number of American presence in Iran as military, agricultural, industrial advisers and entrepreneurs because of the White Revolution. The Shah’s White Revolution was widely seen as an American-inspired reform package to please Washington and many Iranians saw the US as the prime mover in the White Revolution and as a malevolent force throughout Iran. Once the Shah launched different projects in a bid to modernize his country under the White Revolution, only the Americans were commissioned to submit plans for rapid modernization of his country. This led American advisors, experts, trainers and technicians to crowd into Iran and by the late 1970s their number reached to 55,000 or more —a phenomenon resented by most urban Iranians.<sup>27</sup> As time passed the fortune hunters, financial scavengers, and the jobless and disillusioned recently returned from Vietnam found their easy way to Iran. The rise of these private citizens was nearly a 600% increase from 1972 to 1978. This huge American presence placed tremendous strain on Iran’s economy by contributing to soaring inflation rates. Roy Parviz Mottahedeh, then an associate professor of Islamic history at Princeton University has stated that Iranian life seemed clogged with foreigners, most conspicuously the 85,000 Americans resident in Iran before the revolution. When the Iranian economy slowed down in 1975 and the poor had reason to remember Khomeini’s fervent advocacy of their cause against a government that seemed to have devoted incalculable wealth to buying foreign weapons and gadgets, they also remembered that Khomeini had tried to protect them from the seemingly privileged foreign “plunderers” who were now so conspicuous throughout Iran and involved in the oil business and military contracting.<sup>28</sup>

**Sixthly**, the US economic aid to the post-coup pro-US government of the Shah caused corruption in Iran in an unprecedented scale. There is ample evidence that the Shah’s regime got corrupt for its association with the US. The huge flow of US men, money, and arms in Iran since 1953 under Point Four or other economic and military programmes caused social disorder, and increasing level of corruption which the Iranians hated. Iranians saw that the massive US aid which they considered as reward for Shah’s political (1953) and economic concession (1954) to US, was administered by the Shah’s serpentine and corrupt government which was closely associated with the US.<sup>29</sup> To cite an example, in 1962, it is publicly claimed in the Majlis that Iranian Plan Organization had paid US private company named Lilienthal and Clapp \$100 million as payoff

since 1956. In essence, bribery in Iran became a way of life and US corporations parceled out millions of dollars to high-ranking military officers and government officials to secure lucrative deals. The Iranians placed blame on the US for all these.

**Seventhly**, the Iranians witnessed how the US fueled the Shah's ambitions by anointing his regime the policeman of the Persian Gulf and providing huge amount of sophisticated weaponry. Iran quickly became a prime market for the sale of US technology and services and advanced weaponry. The stories of the business deals of billion dollars mostly with US contractors, investors and manufacturers were common in the 1970s. Although Iran was moving ahead with its oil revenues, but the revenues were quickly pocketed by US businessmen. US military suppliers like Grumman, Lockheed, and Westinghouse took over key position in Iran's economy affecting the country's economy badly. By 1978, US companies namely General Motors, Kaiser Engineering Inc., and Starrett Housing Corporation concentrated with the Shah to provide more than \$12 million worth of plant and hardware. Thus the Shah's regime turned into "a means for the U.S. and its allies to pillage the Iranian oil resources and meet their interests."<sup>30</sup> Iranians saw how American firms "pumped" the petrodollars out of Iran in exchange for needless armaments, industrial products and consumer goods. In the eyes of many Iranians, these "sales" were just another means of looting their country's resources. Apart from spending oil revenues indiscriminately for US arms Shah had also spent regularly on American military personnel, technical advisers, educators, instructors and their families since Americans were concentrated in the high technical posts. One estimate shows that the US personnel in Iran in the year 1976 had reached 35,000 and on the average, the Iranian government paid \$150,000 per year for each one. The total amount of money which the Iranian government paid for the American personnel per year stood \$5.25 million, an amount which was ten times more than government expenditure on education and health.<sup>31</sup> Discontent thus grew when the Iranians saw that the US first encouraged the Shah's imperial dreams and then took control of Iranian oil revenues by selling huge arms and sending new advisers in Iran who had been paid by Iranian government. Many Iranians saw this surrogacy of the Shah's regime as a sign of Iran's complete subservience to the US and its loss of independence. This popular perception developed into a profound source of alienation.<sup>32</sup>

**Eighthly**, side by side with such US economic presence in Iran, the US arms and ammunitions, cosmetics and other luxurious products found their way into lucrative markets in Iran while thousands of US banks and companies in Iran controlled a big share of the country's economy. Additionally, the massive importing of agricultural goods, especially wheat from the US, coupled with the absence or inadequacy of protective tariffs, contributed to the ruin of countless small farmers, aggravated rural unemployment and swelled the migration to the cities. Together with the arms sales, US support to the Shah's economic policies resulted in a dramatic increase in the

volume of trade between Iran and the US, which was overwhelmingly in favour of the US. In this way, the US was controlling the total economy of Iran and Iranians felt heavy hands of the US in the exploitation of their economy. Therefore, when a host of economic problems converged in 1978, trouble erupted and Iranians rightly placed the blame on the US. As the Shah failed to increase oil price in 1976 OPEC meeting in Doha due to US-Saudi growing relations, Iran's economic condition deteriorated quickly. The inflation and recession hit Iran in a very damaging fashion and this increased the regime's unpopularity. This unpopularity exploded into uprising however, the US had become identified by more and more Iranians as a major contributor to the deficiencies in the Shah's programmes and the worsening economic situation in Iran.<sup>33</sup>

**(c) US Socio-Cultural Interference**

The 1979 Iranian Islamic Revolution was a political, economic as well as a cultural revolution. That is, the goal of the Islamic Revolution in Iran was not only to free Iranians politically from the Shah but also to liberate them conceptually from Western ways of thinking.<sup>34</sup> Alongside the US political and economic interference in Iran, US socio-cultural interference caused also much anti-American feeling among the Iranians who later stood against Western cultural aggression during the 1978-1979 revolutionary period. Following the 1953 coup, the Shah became fully dependent on the US which meant Iran's association with the West and its society and culture. Back in December 1954, the Shah, highlighting the significance of friendly and close relations between Iran and the US, noted that the way of life of the Western world fitted in with Iran's Islamic values and hence, "Westernization is our ordeal."<sup>35</sup> Thus the Shah himself placed Iran under Western cultural influence. At the same time, the extensive US involvement in Iranian economy and military brought with it Western social and cultural influence, particularly among those educated urban Iranians who found the Shah's regime and its pro-Western stance desirable and beneficial.

However, since the mid-1970s popular discontent with the Shah because of his adoption of Westernization culture and modernization of Iranian society on Western pattern swelled as every segment of Iran's society: Muslim clerics, merchants, young workers and feudal landlords felt aggrieved by the Shah's modernization programmes in Iran's society and culture. Attempts at Westernizing Iran by turning the country's landed nobility into capitalist investors through the White Revolution and encouragement of secularism in education (co-education), politics (nationalism), society and culture (free mixing of male and female) only increased the anti-regime feeling and with it anti-Americanism since the Shah's modernization brought these Western cultural influences because of his strong association with the US. It is pertinent to relate that by any standard, vulgarity or nudity was, as it is today, much popular in Western culture. Under the Shah cinemas and theatre promoted this vulgar Western culture in Iran. Vulgar films produced in the Hollywood were displayed in the cinema halls in Iran, while porn-pictures were

shown in public in posters.<sup>36</sup> Foreigners, especially American fortune hunters who lived in Iran introduced pornographic films into the country for making money. Meanwhile, the Shah himself promoted Hollywood films, radio and TV programmes indiscriminately while he put limits on local and popular folk theatre by demanding licenses, scripts and so forth.

After having such state encouragement from the Shah beaches became the places where bikinis had become women's standard dress, movie theaters showed X-rated films while in nightclubs revelers danced provocatively. Thus the Iranian society became consumed by the media, much to the chagrin of the traditional sectors, who looked askance at the mass importation of Western values and sexual laxity through cinema, radio, and television. Traditional and religious-minded Iranians who were unwilling to admit whole-sale borrowing from the West, saw that their customs and traditions were about to extinct in face of Western cultural imperialism and nudism. They saw how their own Islamic culture was being supplemented by Western one through films and TV programmes. They viewed this as cultural domination of the West and the Shah was facilitating this foreign cultural domination of their country. Noticing the degree of Western or American cultural influence some Iranian intellectuals considered the foreign culture as a 'poison emanating from an immature civilization.' Along with them the Islamic clergy—the natural political leaders of the Iranians feared the threat of "Westoxication"<sup>37</sup> to the integrity of Islamic values and culture. This helped to crystallize the anti-Americanism in Iran because "In all of these events the United States was seen as the inspiration, if not the direct instigator."<sup>38</sup>

Meanwhile, large American presence in Iran also promoted the Westernization of the country's society and culture which also in turn ended in anti-Americanism. Iran had the largest US Military Assistance Advisory Group in the world. By 1975 US military presence in Iran had become a regular feature of life. For example, every air flight arrival in Iranian cities from the US was greeted by an American voice on a public address system saying: "This way all United States military personnel".<sup>39</sup> The vast number of Americans, as just mentioned, had economic as well as socio-cultural repercussions. The presence of this huge number of Americans everywhere in Iran placed Western culture before the eyes of all Iranians who generally viewed that like past foreign (now US) influences were once again manipulating Iranian society. The Ulamas and the general Iranians resented the American presence. They viewed such huge number of American (and other Europeans) presence in Iran as the increasing influence of pernicious Western cultural values and practices on Iranian society. They appalled by the mushrooming of bars, liquor stores, discos, and movie theatres exposing the populace to "decadent" Western modes of conduct.<sup>40</sup>

They also resented American free-mixing in Iran since the Americans hardly showed respect toward Iranian Islamic culture. Sometimes they turned a blind eye to religious and native traditional culture. The presence of a large number of US military personnel in the provincial

town of Isfahan with a crop of ex-Saigon prostitutes for them also created considerable friction and anti-American feeling among the Iranians.<sup>41</sup> Additionally, ugly incidents and anti-Islamic events were taking place over and over again since the Americans living in Iran drank brazenly and dressed in ways that provoked conservative Iranians. They often committed sacrilegious things in the holy places including mosques for their merry-making purposes. One example may be cited here in this regard. One day American teenagers drove motorbikes through the Shah Mosque. While in “October 1975, three American women dressed in bikini shorts and halters strolled into the ancient Friday Mosque where, laughing, gesturing, and talking in loud voices, they toured the holy place in their own good time.”<sup>42</sup> Reports of American rowdiness, drunkenness, and physical violence regularly appeared in the Iranian newspapers. James A. Bill has recorded that one Iranian newspaper reported that a “lewd American” (*Amrika ‘i-yi chishmcharan*) made advances to an Iranian woman and then started to fight with her husband. He has also mentioned that phrases such as “drunken Americans” (*Amrika ‘iha-yi mast*) and “pleasure-crazed Americans” (*Amrika ‘iha-yi ayyash*) began to appear regularly in the conversation of Iranians in Tehran and Isfahan.<sup>43</sup>

At about the same time, a cultural gap between Iranians and Americans was acutely seen in the area of mindset during the 1953-1979 period. Although the US advisers carried a certain refreshing enthusiasm to their work in Iran but they suffered from superiority complexes. US business man with his glossy Western products, the technical expert with his higher knowledge, and even the missionary with his outspoken condemnation of the country’s faith, all run the risk of evoking in those with whom they have to deal the reaction of the Iranians. Additionally, hatred, racism, ignorance and disrespect were the order of the day. Sometimes, Americans insulted and berated Iranians while at other times they used to respond negatively and aggressively to Iranian society. Iranians were commonly referred to as “sand-niggers,” “rag-heads,” “rags,” “stinkies,” and Bedouins, and their culture was referred to as “camel culture.” The Iranians deeply resented this cultural disparity or American cultural superiority.<sup>44</sup>

Amidst these events stated above that resulted in strong anti-Americanism in Iran, in mid-August 1977, the eleventh *Shiraz Arts Festival* took place to promote “the arts and the appreciation for traditional Iranian art forms,” and to elevate “the standard of culture in the country.”<sup>45</sup> Under the direct supervision of the Shah’s wife Farah Diba some programmes displayed in the Shiraz festival were too modern and provoked the public sentiment against the Shah and his foreign backer. For example, a Brazilian dance troupe performed simulated sexual acts on stage at the festival. Similar programme by the name of *Pig, Child, Fire* was staged by a Hungarian troupe while “semi-nude dances had been performed in a Senegalese ballet in Maurice Bejart’s second ballet, where several women appeared with their breasts showing.”<sup>46</sup> Western vulgarity in Iran reached its height during this art festival when an avant-grade theatrical piece performed a rape



scene in the main shopping street of Shiraz in full view of passers-by. According to the then British Ambassador to Iran Anthony Parsons, the event involved “a rape which was performed in full (no pretense) by a man (either naked or without trousers ...) on a woman whose dress had been ripped off by her attacker.”<sup>47</sup>

Given this seriousness of such anti-Islamic display, the 1977 Art festival quickly provided fodder for both religious and secular Iranians or revolutionaries as they became known by now. Many Iranian conservatives saw such sexual activity that was performed before the startled eyes of the Muslim people of that city as the last straw and took to the streets in an acerbic protest against foreign moral indecencies.<sup>48</sup> Nikki R. Keddie has emphatically stated that even some Iranians who supported Westernization reacted negatively.<sup>49</sup> In protest of the 1977 Shiraz festival, Iranian women who had previously worn modern attire now joined their more traditional sisters in donning the veil as a symbol of protest against a monarch whose modernization programme had once attempted to ban it. Thus young women by the tens of thousands have gone back to the black veil as a symbol of their discontent with the US-backed Shah’s efforts to Westernize Iranian society and culture. In this way, the use of the *chadour*, the traditional veil among college-educated women as a sign of opposition to the government and its pro-Western cultural policy increased. Thus the Shah’s close association with the US and his rapid westernization or “intensive Americanization” of Iran’s socio-economic and cultural sectors badly offended the Iranians or revolutionaries and facilitated their incorporation into the revolution. They denounced the rapid Westernization and they felt necessary to seek Iran’s salvation not in the Westernization pushed by the Shah’s regime but in a return to an idealized indigenous Islam. Ayatullah Imam Khomeini who was in exile in Iraq lambasted all Western traditions that had first trickled and then poured into Iran, from unveiled women to hard liquor and pornographic movies, while in his absence in Iran leading Ulamas including Ayatullah Taleqani and Ayatullah Montazari called for Islam’s return to its roots as a way of defending national virtue and identity against the rape by Western technology.<sup>50</sup> Khomeini’s supporters embraced Islamism as a means of eliminating the influence of foreign powers in Iran. As the anti-Americanism exploded into explosion and engulfed the US-backed Shah’s repressive regime since early 1978, the targets for revolutionary attacks had been the cinema halls (and television stations and theatres) showing pornographic films, liquor stores, and sexually explicit billboards on movie houses, the PEPSI Cola Company, American and British libraries.<sup>51</sup>

**(d) Imam Ayatullah Khomeini and the New Turn of Anti-Americanism**

Every revolution needs an enemy; however, in the eyes of Ayatullah Imam Khomeini Iran had two: the Shah and the US. Khomeini’s hostility towards the Shah and the US began in 1963 following the Shah’s initiation of the White Revolution. In his hostility Khomeini targeted the US-backed Shah’s autocratic rule and his violation of the constitution, the initiation of US-

prescribed reforms programme after the name of the White Revolution in 1963, the granting of capitulatory rights to American advisers and military personnel in Iran and their dependents in 1964, and the maintenance of diplomatic and commercial relations with Israel, a state hostile to Muslims and Islam. Khomeini denounced the Shah for supporting the US and Israel against the Arab world; trampling political liberties, especially the constitutional laws; making Iran increasingly dependent on the West; and using cultural imperialism to undermine Islam and Iran. Khomeini also denounced Iran's economic penetration by US and its ally Israel and thus the loss of Iranian markets and bankruptcies among farmers and bazaaris.<sup>52</sup> Maryam Panah has stated: "Khomeini's resolute language, directed largely against the United States, enabled him to assume the leadership of the revolutionary movement and to ride the historical wave of nationalism and the general tide of anti-imperialism."<sup>53</sup> In this regard, anti-Americanism helped Khomeini to play the leading role in the subsequent Iranian eruption. Factually, without anti-Americanism in Iran, there would have been no significant role of Imam Khomeini to play, and without Khomeini's role in handling the anti-Americanism there would have been no Islamic Revolution.

It is important to state that on January 9, 1963, the Shah with US prescription initiated land and other reforms in the name of White Revolution to preserve his regime avoiding a bloody revolution. Ironically, Shah's White Revolution invited a bloody revolution in which Khomeini played a crucial role. Noted Iran's foreign policy expert R. K. Ramazani has stated that just as the 1953 coup d'état of a decade earlier was perceived as an "American coup," the White Revolution of 1963 were regarded as an "American revolution."<sup>54</sup> Against the background of growing anti-Americanism for US political, economic and cultural interference in Iran, Khomeini protested the Shah's White Revolution and symbolized the religious opposition to the Shah's regime from then on. During the occasional speech on Ashura (the tenth day of Muharram and the most important Shi'a holy day) on June 3, 1963, Khomeini delivered an emotional sermon and inflammatory speech condemning and denouncing the Shah as a wretched, miserable man and accusing him of being an enemy of Iran.<sup>55</sup> He blasted the White Revolution calling it was the product of a Jewish, Baha'i, and American conspiracy to humiliate and subvert Islam. He labeled the Shah as the puppet of the Americans on the ground that the Shah introduced the White Revolution taking US advice. He also severely attacked the US and then asked Muslims of the world in general, and Iranians in particular, to rise against the superpowers especially the US.<sup>56</sup>

Khomeini's Ashura speech that was directed against the Shah, his patron—the US and US ally Israeli quickly made his arch enemy of the Shah. Fearful of Khomeini's anti-Shah and anti-US role, on June 5, 1963, Shah's elite force arrested Khomeini and put into prison which caused serious anti-government demonstrations in different cities of Iran. The scale and severity of the popular anger against the Shah's regime unnerved the Shah and shook his throne. The Shah, knowing full well of his patron's supportive position, resorted to brutal repression to quell the

demonstration. His US-trained army under the command of General Gholam Ali Oveisi bloodily suppressed the protest movement. The army was given shoot-to-kill order and it took six days for the government to control the situation and reportedly more than 10,000 people were killed. This won General Oveisi a nickname—the Butcher of Tehran but increased popular alienation from both the regime and the US.<sup>57</sup> After the crackdown, Khomeini repeatedly declared anti-American pronouncements and thus galvanized the nation into one solid powerful opposition force to topple the US-backed Shah. He also played decisive role in doubling anti-Americanism in Iran after the granting of SOFA to the US in October 1964, by the Majlis in return for a \$200 million loan from the US as stated in previous section. According to SOFA, as also mentioned previously, US citizens in Iran were to exempt from any prosecution in any Iranian court regardless of what crime they may have committed. They supposedly were to be prosecuted in US courts. Daniel E. Harmon preferred to mention it as ‘a diplomatic gesture apparently made by the shah in order to obtain a \$200 million loan from the United States’<sup>58</sup> while Barry Rubin used to call it “updating of the old bilateral military agreements”.<sup>59</sup>

Factually SOFA established the US “capitulations” in Iran. The connection between the two bills and the capitulatory nature of the first were publicly and strongly condemned and denounced by Khomeini who had been released and allowed to return to Qum in April 1964 after ten months of house arrest in Tehran since June 5, 1963. On October 27, 1964, in a condemnatory message Imam Khomeini characterized the SOFA as a “document of the enslavement of Iran”, and called that the bill would reduce the Iranian people to a level lower than that of an American dog.<sup>60</sup> In the words of a leading scholar of Iran, “His [Khomeini’s] fiery speech stands as one of the most important and moving political statements made in Iran in this century. In it, Khomeini powerfully and frontally attacked the shah and America for attempting to destroy the dignity, integrity, and autonomy of Iran.”<sup>61</sup> In fact, after the passing of the SOFA, Khomeini singled out the US as Iran’s number one foreign enemy for special criticism for its activities in Iran. The Ayatullah said with acerbity, “I declare that this shameful vote . . . is contrary to Islam and the Koran and hence illegal.” “The world must know,” he continued, “that all the difficulties faced by the Iranian nation and the Muslim peoples are because of aliens, because of America . . .”<sup>62</sup> In his anti-capitulations proclamation Khomeini also accused the Shah of handing the country’s bazaars over to America and Israel. According to Baqer Moin, author of English-speaking biography of Ayatullah Imam Khomeini, the Imam finally concluded by saying:

Let the American President know that in the eyes of the Iranian people, he is the most repulsive member of the human race today because of the injustice he has imposed on our Muslim nation . . . All of our troubles today are caused by America and Israel. Israeli itself derives from America: these deputies and ministers that have been imposed upon us derive from America—they are all agents of America, for if they were not, they would rise up in protest . . . Those old men in the Senate are traitors, and all those in the lower house who voted in favour

of this affair are traitors. They are not our representatives. The whole world must know that they nor the representatives of Iran. Or, suppose they are: now I dismiss them. They dismissed from their posts and all the bills they have passed up until now are invalid.<sup>63</sup>

In his historic speech delivered on October 27, 1964 speech Khomeini also said: “America is worse than Britain; Britain is worse than America. The Soviet Union is worse than both of them. They are all worse and more unclean than each other! But today it is America that we are concerned with.”<sup>64</sup> Khomeini’s desire to free Iran from “the hands of foreigners” and his desire to re-establish the pre-eminence of Shiite Islamic law and finally his strong stand on the issue of granting diplomatic immunity to the US citizens helped make him a national leader of extraordinary influence. Fearful of growing influence of Khomeini, the Shah’s SAVAK arrested him on November 4, 1964 and then exiled to Turkey on the hope that in exile he would fade from popular memory. On October 5, 1965, he left Turkey for Najaf in Iraq, where he spent last thirteen years. What damage was done to the Shah-US collaboration in banishing Khomeini? According to US State Department, “Khomeini’s exile has aroused dormant nationalist feelings. The Shah and the United States have been branded as both anti-nationalist and anti-religious. This new attitude has tarnished our formerly favorable image, poses a threat to our interests in Iran, and will certainly our task there far more difficult.”<sup>65</sup>

True, the years in exile deprived Khomeini of a direct presence on the Iranian political scene, but it could not prevent him from maintaining his regular criticisms of the Shah’s regime and its supporter—the US. On February 6, 1971 in a message to the pilgrims on the occasion of the pilgrimage to Makkah Khomeini stated: “... it must be said that Iran has become a military base for Israel, which means, by extension, for America.”<sup>66</sup> Taking the full advantage of hostile Iran-Iraq relations before the 1975 Algiers Accord, Khomeini’s recorded and written messages were quickly parceled out of Iraq and circulated clandestinely throughout city and countryside of Iran on tapes and on booklet forms. “In them”, as put by Eric Rouleau, “the Imam designated the United States as “the head of the imperialist serpent,” accused the international monopolies of “looting” Iran’s resources, complained of “domination” by foreign capital and the squandering of public funds in massive arms purchases.”<sup>67</sup> Khomeini continued to issue anti-Shah and anti-US messages which only strengthened public opposition against the Shah. Khomeini later calls for the regime’s overthrow from Najaf provoked the Shah to press the Iraqi government to silence or expel him from Iraq. Accordingly, the Baathist regime of Iraq expelled Khomeini from Iraq on October 5, 1978. Turned down by Kuwait, Khomeini now moved into a simple bungalow in the garden of an expatriate Iranian’s house in the suburb of Neauphle-le-Chateau about twenty-five miles outside of Paris on October 12, 1978. Although the CIA followed him even in Paris and rented a villa near his home, perhaps to keep an eye on his activities, however, from there the

guiding inspiration of the Islamic Revolution continued his struggles against the Shah and his powerful foreign supporter—the US.<sup>68</sup>

During his stay in France Ayatullah Khomeini, made his position clear on the US interference in Iran declaring it as “American hegemony” and directed the ongoing opposition movement in Iran with single-minded determination to end the Pahlavi dynasty, which had sold Iran’s soul to the West, in particular the US and promoted corruption, immorality, and oppression in Iran. In this way, Khomeini steered his followers and anti-Shah opposition in Iran on a maximalist line. Since he spoke the language of the Iranian masses and sensitively highlighted their everyday problems and sufferings, the people responded to his call spontaneously while major religious and secular leaders including Mehdi Bazargan, Karim Sanjabi and the bazaari leaders all succumbed to the overall leadership of the Ayatullah. The Iranians respected and admired Khomeini and now accepted his leadership and rose against the US-supported Shah. In this regard, Khomeini’s portrayal of the Shah as Washington’s stooge drew wide appeal while the well-publicized chants of “Death to America” (*marg-bar Amrika*) got a strong and logical basis in Iran because of US association with the Shah.

**(e) The Revolution, US Policy and the End of Iran-US Intimate Relations**

Historians are in agreement that the year 1977 set the stage for the Islamic Revolution in Iran. Many Iranians genuinely felt that, under the Shah, their nation had become a weak fiefdom slavishly serving the interests of the US.<sup>69</sup> Eventually when the anti-Shah and anti-US demonstrations and resistance shook Iran since 1977 they responded to Khomeini’s call. In the midst of the growing anti-Americanism and anti-regime sentiment at home, the Shah made his twelfth and last official visit to US on November 14, 1977. In the US also the Shah and his wife were greeted by demonstration by the Confederation of Iranian Students outside the gates of the White House when they were standing on the White House lawn in a welcoming ceremony on November 15, 1977 provided by President Carter and his wife Rosalynn Carter. The demonstrators shouted: “Down with the fascist Shah: and “Down with U.S. imperialism.”<sup>70</sup> Some of the demonstrators with banners bearing a portrait of Ayatullah Imam Khomeini and describing the Shah as a puppet of the US and demanding “U.S. hands off Iran” were also demonstrating indicating that Iranian anti-Shah and anti-American slogans reached even the land of Uncle Sam.<sup>71</sup> The anti-Shah and anti-American demonstration was so strong that the police had to use tear-gas to disperse the demonstrators. The picture on Iranian television of the Shah rubbing his tears caused from the tear-gas spilling on White House lawns (see Appendices) tarnished his image at home. The demonstrations in Washington were paralleled by similar but more violent demonstrations in Tehran and other cities in Iran against the Shah and his US supporters. This made the Shah really worry in line with Carter’s pressure for human rights issue. However,

President Carter at private and public meeting with the Shah was effusive in his praise for the Shah which was tantamount to flattery.<sup>72</sup>

Parallely, amidst the political turmoil and despite his commitment to human rights, US President Jimmy Carter overtly chose to spend the last evening of 1977 and to celebrate the New Year's Day of 1978 in the company of the Shah whose regime Amnesty International had already described as the world's worst violator of human rights while by then the US abandonment of the Shah was complete as stated in previous section. In real sense, with a stated motive to provide some commendable gestures through false open support but with a real motive of having got assurance from the Shah that Iran provide oil to Israel at the initial phase of a comprehensive Middle East peace between Israel, Egypt and the Palestinians Carter visited Iran.<sup>73</sup> President Carter himself saw the Camp David Middle Eastern talks (that were in progress) as "a chance for one of the bright moments in history," and noted that "it had been 2,000 years since there was peace between Egypt and a free Jewish nation".<sup>74</sup> It is in this background, Carter visited the Shah not for ensuring US support for him but ensuring Iran's crucial support for oil supply to Israel during the months leading to the Camp David Accords in face of Arab opposition to the ongoing Camp David talks.<sup>75</sup> In Tehran amidst the splendor of Shah's Niavaran Palace, Carter toasted the Shah in words with to some extent, similar words a decade ago in the context of Iran-US close bilateral relations, when Iran's then Prime Minister Abbas Hoveyda during his visit to US on December 5, 1968 mentioned in his statement to the US President Richard Nixon.<sup>76</sup> Exactly a decade later in a changed world perspective and in the context of strained Iran-US relations, President Carter uttered the same words which later become memorable for Carter's 'diplomatic flattery'. On December 31, 1977, Carter said: "Iran, under the great leadership of the Shah, is an island of stability in one of the most troubled areas of the world. This is a great tribute to you, Your Majesty, and to your leadership, and to the respect, admiration, and love which your people give to you."<sup>77</sup> The irony of the fact is that Carter's speech was a part of campaign for getting Iran's oil for Israel at the initial phase of the Camp David Accords as just mentioned and for providing mental satisfaction openly to the Shah for it appeared to the Carter administration that following the Shah's US visit the Shah became doubtful about continuous US support for his regime. This was evident when the Shah appeared quite demoralized in a photo session with Carter (see Appendices). Hence, Carter's speech proved utterly wrong within the span of a year and it was natural.

However, whatever was happening in Iran-US relations as a secret part of Carter's policy of abandonment of the Shah, Carter's spending time with the Shah in Iran confused the revolutionaries that the US policy toward Iran and the Shah remained unchanged and they took Carter's support for the Shah as genuine. Carter's support for the Shah only served by then to further inflame the opposition and to discredit the man by then known as 'Jimmy's dog',<sup>78</sup> while

anti-Americanism continued unabated. While Carter's speech praising the Shah appeared as a bombshell to the revolutionaries who began chanting "Death to Carter" along with "Death to the Shah" in the streets of Tehran. In this way, Carter did accomplish to further alienate those groups and classes in Iran who spent the year fighting the Shah.<sup>79</sup> The revolutionaries now concluded that the US President Carter was a dangerous hypocrite, therefore, following upon his visit demonstrations, riots, and strikes took new turn that shook Iran with ever intensifying scale of violence. As the scale and intensity of the revolutionary movement heightened, the US-backed Shah got perplexed. The Shah mistakenly thought that Carter's Tehran visit was a sign of strong US support for his government and decided to challenge Khomeini head-on by publishing anti-Khomeini article in the nation's largest daily newspaper *Ettela'at* in which Khomeini was personally insulted and vilified as a reactionary. Published on January 7, 1978, the fateful article entitled "Iran and Red and Black Colonialism" described Khomeini as a British agent and 'a mad homosexual Indian poet' who used to indulge himself in romantic poetry during his years of obscurity in India. The article also labeled Khomeini as the instigator of the "anti-national" riots of June 5, 1963 and ended by stating that Khomeini received large sums from the British to continue his fight against the Shah. This and another anti-Khomeini and anti-Ulama articles were published in the wrong belief that the huge social and cultural changes that had occurred in Iran since the early 1960s could easily attack and defeat the outdated obscurantism of the Khomeinists. Quite contrarily, the publication of anti-Khomeini article was "an event marking the revolution's beginning" and it appeared as a timely *casus belli* for mobilizing discontented segments of the population of Iran. Beyond the Khomeini followers, intellectual and middle-class clerics who had grave reservations about supporting Khomeini felt obliged to add their voices to the protests in the wake of Carter's Tehran visit.

As time progressed, anti-Shah protest movements took violent form as Iranians attacked police stations, the Rastakhiz Party offices, liquor shops, the movie houses showing sexy films and chanting for the first time "Death to the Shah!"<sup>80</sup> Following the Rex Cinema fire on August 19, 1978 which claimed 410 Iranians, the country was afire. On September 7, 1978, half a million people demonstrated in Tehran shouting 'Death to the Shah', 'Khomeini is our leader' and 'We want an Islamic government'. Khomeini quickly referred to these demonstrations as 'a referendum' that 'the Shah's regime has no place in Iran'. The Shah realized that the situation was getting out of control, therefore, he needed to take some drastic actions. He directed General Gholam Ali Oveisi, the military governor of Tehran to control the ever-worsening political situation. General Oveisi who won the nickname the 'Butcher of Tehran' for massacring over 10,000 Iranians during the June 1963 upheaval staged a bloodbath with troops who fired to kill on September 8, 1978. In Iranian history the day is known as the 'Black Friday'.

Iranians were angered by the carnage committed on the Black Friday. Their anger doubled and with it anti-Americanism when two days later President Carter telephoned the Shah early morning on September 10, 1978, and affirmed US support for his leadership. When the transcript of the telephonic conversation between the Shah and President Carter was made public by the Iranian media it raised Iranian anti-Americanism (to which James A. Bill calls 'the heartbeat of the revolution' as stated above) to a high pitch. Thus the Black Friday massacre and the subsequent US support to it radicalized the opposition which took an all-embracing struggle against the US-backed Shah. Following Carter's telephonic assurances, US National Security Advisor Zbigniew Brzezinski pushed the Shah to implement the "iron fist" or "scorched earth" policy in October 1978 to ward off a Khomeinist victory over the long-time US ally Shah. With such encouragement from an important US official the Shah ignored direct communication with Khomeini, then in exile in Paris. After watching his troops kill over ten thousands of his own people in the streets of Iran's cities, the Shah concluded that violent tactics were doomed to fail.<sup>81</sup> But President Carter was still providing him false assurance of support. Carter told the Shah "Hang firm and ....count on our backing", but at the same time, with the onset of the Islamic Revolution in full swing and given the anti-US sentiment of the Revolution, his administration evacuated forty-five thousand Americans from Iran in late 1978 and early 1979.<sup>82</sup> The paradox of US policy was that while it was supporting openly the Shah, covertly it was reducing its involvement in Iran as part of Washington's policy of abandonment of the Shah, a fact that remained unknown to the Shah. The opposition kept viewing the US as the sole supporter of the Shah. The reason was clear: Washington continued to give the Shah periodic gestures of support through press conferences.<sup>83</sup>

Meanwhile, as the political situation in Iran worsened, it became necessary for the US to search for a 'substitute pillar' of Iran which it found in Sadat's Egypt.<sup>84</sup> At the same time, some high officials including Deputy Secretary of Defense Charles Duncan, Under Secretary of State Richard Cooper, Deputy Assistant Secretary of State Jack Miklos, Congressman Stephen Solarz, the State Department team of Clement, Griffin, and Cohen, and an emissary from Brzezinski named Art Callahan visited Tehran in a gesture of overt support for the Shah. Of them Callahan's visit was extraordinary because he was a businessman who had once been CIA station chief in Iran. On a visit to Iran he now entered into a negotiation with the Shah's government for a multi-billion dollar contract,<sup>85</sup> which indicates that he was in Tehran to bribe the military loyal to the Shah and the US for retaining a pro-US government in Iran with or without Shah in power. Amidst this gamble of diplomacy and diplomatic flattery of President Carter<sup>86</sup> on November 4, 1978, his administration also sent State Department officials Carl Clement, George Griffin, and Stephen Cohen to Tehran to get information of the Iranian affairs first hand. On their return to Washington they explained the seriousness of the situation they had witnessed in Iran which



convinced them that a genuine revolution was in progress. Gary Sick, who was then the principal White House aide for Iran and serving on the National Security Council staff, has claimed that officials in Washington were aware that the Shah was in serious trouble.<sup>87</sup>

A US-German author and analyst of geopolitical and economic issues by the name of Frederick William Engdahl has claimed that around this time the CIA involved to throw the Shah into trouble and to clean American hands and thus for getting rid of the 'corrupt' Shah, the US government was going to stage "the new CIA-led coup" against the man whom the US had placed into power some 26 years earlier.<sup>88</sup> To succeed that coup US security advisers to the Shah's SAVAK implemented a policy of ever more brutal repression in a manner calculated to maximize popular antipathy to the Shah instead of initiating reforms or negotiating with the opposition leaders including Imam Khomeini. President Carter himself joined the chorus of Shah's repression by falsely providing periodic gesture of support until the Shah appointed Shahpour Bakhtiar Prime Minister in early January 1979. As a result, many informed Iranians later used to believe that "circumstantial evidence suggests that SAVAK and the CIA originally encouraged unrest among the Western-educated elite in the hope that a Rightist government would replace the autocratic rule of the Shah, but the strength of the religious eruption, sweeping all before it was totally unforeseen and unmanageable."<sup>89</sup>

It was in this critical moment when the Shah needed the reassurances of US Embassy most Ambassador William Sullivan took an extensive home leave perhaps, as part of US policy of abandoning the Shah and leaving him to face the revolution alone. The Shah himself had harsh words for the US and said he did not receive support when he needed it most.<sup>90</sup> By the time Sullivan came back in Iran on November 9, 1978, Iranian political realities entered into a new direction while Iranians were waiting for a change. Upon his return, Sullivan wrote the historic 'bombshell' cable message entitled "Thinking the Unthinkable" in which he cautiously but seriously indicated that the US had best begin preparing contingency plans in case the Shah did not survive politically.<sup>91</sup> In his report, Sullivan urged Washington to "think the unthinkable", that is an Iran without the Shah. For that he recommended that the US government reach out to Ayatullah Khomeini in Paris. Sullivan speculated that the new government might have been more friendly had the plan succeeded.<sup>92</sup> However, influenced by National Security Advisor Zbigniew Brzezinski President Carter ignored the recommendation. It is also said that President Carter did not heed to Sullivan's recommendation not to antagonize the Shah at this stage of the Iranian crisis.<sup>93</sup> But as a scapegoat to this new development, President Carter only expressed dissatisfaction with the intelligence community's failure to warn the administration of the impending political crisis in Iran.

The US now fully understood “that the Shah was on the way to a great fall” and “like Humpty Dumpty, his regime could not be put together again.” Amidst this US understanding the mourning month of Muharram of 1978 began on December 2 with an anti-Shah and anti-American explosion. The bazaar in Tehran was plastered with cartoons of the Shah as Pharaoh lording it over a man representing the Iranian people with a whip marked “Made in U.S.A.” while banners proclaimed, “Every day is ‘Ashura and everywhere is Karbala.” While during the march of Tasu‘a (Muharram ninth, on the eve of Ashura) on December 10, 1978, about one million people and during Ashura on December 11, 1978, two million people marched to reach the Shahyad Square bearing green flags (symbol of Islam), red ones (symbol of martyrdom), and black ones (symbol of Shi‘ism) interspersed with banners reading in English and Persian slogans: “We will kill Iran’s dictator,” “We will destroy Yankee power in Iran.” Some placards said: “Death To The Shah,” “Kill The American Dogs,” and “Khomeini Is Our Leader”. Revolutionaries were also seen to chant slogans including “Arms for the people,” “Hang this American king.”<sup>94</sup> At the Shahyad Square the marchers ratified a 17-point charter by acclamation which demanded an end to monarchy, acceptance of Khomeini as the leader, establishment of an Islamic government, rejuvenation of agriculture, social justice for the deprived masses, protection of religious minorities, and the return of all exiles.<sup>95</sup> Following this developments, Shah’s principal backer—the US government began reviewing its Iran policy. This was evident when on December 7, 1978 President Carter was asked whether the Shah would survive, he categorically replied: “I don’t know. I hope so. This is something in the hands of the Iranian people. ... We personally prefer that the Shah maintain a major role in the government, but that is a decision for the Iranian people to make.”<sup>96</sup> Although in his statement Carter made it clear that he liked the Shah personally, but his statement that it was up to the Iranian people to make up their minds about the Shah, was widely interpreted to mean that the Shah was abandoned.<sup>97</sup>

The US now pressed the Shah for his departure and moved to mediate a smooth transition to a post-Shah regime that would not be unfriendly to Washington. On December 30, 1978, at the US suggestion the Shah asked Dr. Shahpour Bakhtiar (1914-1991), a prominent National Front member to form government. Previously he indicated that if he formed government he would not cut off the supply of oil to Israel. Contrarily, the Khomeini camp made it clear that a future government under Khomeini would not sell oil to Israel.<sup>98</sup> This demonstrates one important fact that why the US supported Bakhtiar in place of Khomeini and developed relationship with him during the transitional period. Under US pressure when on January 4, 1979, the Shah appointed Shahpour Bakhtiar Iran’s Prime Minister the US made it clear that it was going to support the transitional government and use all its influences to unite liberals.<sup>99</sup> Without delay, the US government lent its support to Bakhtiar’s government and asked Iran’s military leaders to support Prime Minister Bakhtiar.<sup>100</sup> The US government strongly believed that if Iran became an Islamic

Republic, it would eventually end up in the Communist camp given Tudeh's strength in Iran and the US government would not allow happening so. For that Washington lent its full support to Bakhtiar government. However, the US government viewed that there was still a chance that an Iran directed by such a moderate group led by Bakhtiar would desire very close relations with the US.

The US had another calculation that in case the Bakhtiar government fell to the revolutionaries or any other party, then any successor regimes to the Shah either Shapour Bakhtiar or Khomeini would need US technology, markets and continued military advice and material especially, given the fact that the Iranian economic and military infrastructures were American in design. Therefore, the US was not in a position to be afraid of a future government in Iran that would necessarily be antithetical to US interests. There were also thinking prevailed in Washington that the younger officers in the Iranian army were pro-West and would remain so even without the Shah's presence; that the religious forces of Khomeini would have to depend on the pro-West military to maintain order; that Khomeini was a benign figure—"the Gandhi of Iran," as William Sullivan called him and would play a relatively passive and benevolent role in government, and that the military and the moderates would easily control the Islamists and, after the Shah's departure, would oversee a transition to a constitutional government, that would be pro-US.

Despite these thoughts, there was a strong reason for the US to be concerned about the Bakhtiar government as it lacked Khomeini's support. Hence, the US government sent General Robert Huyser, a high-ranking US military official to Iran. Huyser arrived in Iran on January 4, 1979, the very day Shahpour Bakhtiar formed government. Huyser's charge was to hold the Iranian military together to protect its integrity and to send a sharp and clear signal that the US stood behind the current regime. In case the Bakhtiar government fell in face of Islamists led by Khomeini, then Huyser was to encourage the US-trained pro-American Iranian generals to defuse the protests and thus foil the revolution by carrying out a coup d'état against the Islamic Revolution.<sup>101</sup> In the context of such US calculations, on January 8, 1979, President Carter sent a secret message to Khomeini through the French President Giscard d'Estaing requesting him not to oppose Bakhtiar government. But Khomeini flatly rejected President Carter's request and advised him to "remove" the Shah and withhold support from Bakhtiar.<sup>102</sup> Following this development, Washington directed Ambassador Sullivan to inform the Shah that the US believed it would be wise for him to leave the country temporarily. In fact, the US wanted the Shah be out of Iran to maintain the integrity of the US-trained Iranian armed forces and to strengthen Bakhtiar's position politically.<sup>103</sup>

An abandoned Shah now had to comply with the inevitability and on January 16, 1979 he along with his wife Farah Diba boarded on Boeing 707 and left for Egypt. As the Shah flew out of Iran,

masses of people rushed to the streets of the major cities and held frenzied celebrations with anti-American slogans: “*Shah raft! Shah raft!*” meaning “The Shah is gone! “The Shah is gone!” “We got rid of the Shah, Now it’s the Americans’ turn”, “Yankee go home, the Shah is dead” and “Shah has fled, SAVAK is fatherless”.<sup>104</sup> Next day in a news conference President Carter reaffirmed Iran-US ties, expressed the hope that once the dust had settled, Iran would remain a friend of the US. He again urged Khomeini to give Bakhtiar government a chance to succeed.<sup>105</sup> But as Khomeini viewed Bakhtiar’s government as illegitimate and the US last card to continue its influence in Iran for Bakhtiar had been nominated by the Shah, therefore, he declared that his next goal was to overthrow the Bakhtiar government and called on the administration, Majlis and the Regency council to resign. Then on January 19, 1979, on the fortieth day memorial of Imam Hussein’s martyrdom Khomeini called for a massive march against Bakhtiar. On January 29, 1979, revolutionaries attended a rally at Tehran University and issued a strong statement that “all U.S. advisors (about 43,000 in number) must leave Iran within one month or face death.” In face of such threat the US government evacuated about 12,000 Americans from Iran between January 31 and February 11 of 1979.

In the midst of these developments, on February 1, 1979, Ayatullah Khomeini, the charismatic leader and inspiration of the Islamic Revolution, after about fifteen years of exile triumphantly returned to Iran. With Khomeini’s victorious return and subsequent collapse of the Iranian military left policymakers in Washington completely hopeless and shocking. Meanwhile, all forces of the revolution including the Islamists following the Khomeini’s line, the National Front, and the communists united behind Khomeini. While disagreeing on ultimate objectives, these forces had in common the immediate goal of changing the political system. In face of such strong united challenge from the revolutionaries Shah’s army gave in, which brought down the Shah-appointed Bakhtiar’s government on February 11, 1979. During the five weeks lifespan the Bakhtiar government tried to maintain a balanced relationship with the US to please both the revolutionaries and the Americans. With the collapse of the Bakhtiar government the Islamic Revolution triumphed which ended the US political intervention, economic exploitation and cultural aggression in Iran and thus terminated 26+years of Iran-US seemingly close bilateral relations.

### **Conclusion**

The above analysis clearly points to the fact that the roots of the Iranian Islamic Revolution are found in two vitally interrelated aspects of the Shah’s US-backed repressive regime: the dictatorship of the Shah and the US domination in Iranian politics, economy, society and culture which gave birth to anti-Americanism that finally exploded in the 1978-1979 period with anti-Shah (Death to the Shah) and anti-American (Death to America) slogans and resulted in the

Islamic Revolution which in turn ended the Iran-US close relations. In a more dynamic sense, the Islamic Revolution broke out with two-dimensional forces: one against the Shah and the other against the US. Once the revolution triumphed, it put a permanent halt to close Iran-US relations. The Khomeini-led Islamic Revolution left no room for a return of a pro-US government in Iran either by a military coup d'état or by any civilian means from National Front leaders. The charismatic leadership of Khomeini and his pervasive influence in Iran outshined all leading figures in Iran and with it the US hope of a successor pro-US government of the Shah. As a result, the US experienced a great setback with the success of the Islamic Revolution which was vehemently an anti-American revolution in nature. The ultimate result was the rupture of Iran-US relations that had started in 1953 and developed through the 1960s and the 1970s. Thus Upon the success of the Islamic Revolution, a long period of Iran-US close relations came to an end while US long-time ally—the Shah left his country leaving behind a long anti-Shah and anti-US legacy for Iran-US relations in the days to come.

### Notes and References of Section V of Chapter 3

1. Eric Rouleau, 'Khomeini's Iran', *Foreign Affairs*, Vol. 59, No. 1, Fall, 1980, p. 4.
2. James A. Bill, *The Eagle and the Lion: ... , op., cit.*, p. 214; R. K. Ramazani, 'Who Lost America? The Case of Iran', *op., cit.*, p. 6.
3. Joseph J. St. Marie and Shahdad Naghshpour, *Revolutionary Iran and the United States: ... , op., cit.*, p. 89.
4. Iranians were and are not anti-American; that is, opposed to the people of the US. The street slogans in the pre-and post-revolutionary period did not say "Death to Americans" or "Death to American Ideals, the Constitution and Bill of Rights," or "Down with American Middle Class," or "Death to American Workers and Students." Rather, the slogans of "Death to the Shah," "Death to Carter" and "Death to America" focused on persons or the government who or which had represented and is being represented best the political, economic and socio-cultural problems of the Iranians.
5. For an illuminating discussion of the Islamic Revolution see: Sayid Athar Abbas Rizvi, *Iran: Royalty, Religion and Revolution*; James A. Bill, *The Eagle and the Lion: ... , op., cit.*; Nikkie R. Keddie, *Modern Iran: ... , op., cit.*; Parviz Daneshvar, *Revolution in Iran*.
6. James A. Bill, *The Eagle and the Lion: ... , op., cit.*, p. 241.
7. Thomas M. Ricks, "Power Politics and Political Culture: US-Iran relations", in *Iran: Political Culture in the Islamic Republic*, Edited by Samih K. Farsoun and Mehrdad Mashayekhi, Routledge, London, 1992, p.165.
8. James A. Bill, *The Eagle and the Lion: ... , op., cit.*, p. 127.
9. The Shah, directly backed by the US, maintained total control over the major centres of power in Iran: the army, government bureaucracy, the Prime Minister's office, the cabinet, the Majlis and the ruling parties. He banned all political parties following his restoration to power in 1953, declared martial law, reduced the role of the Majlis to that of a rubber stamp, although the Majlis continued to meet and to be elected but this was a hollow process.
10. James A. Bill, *The Eagle and the Lion: ... , op., cit.*, p. 186.
11. Nikki R. Keddie, *Modern Iran: ... , op., cit.*, p. 134.
12. Kenneth M. Pollack, *The Persian Puzzle: ... , op., cit.*, p. 116.
13. Shah's human rights violation was a common phenomena since 1953. In 1974, Secretary General of Amnesty International Martin Ennals stated that "No country in the world has a worse record in human rights than Iran". Two years later the International Commission of Jurists sounded the same picture and reported in 1976 that "there can be no doubt that torture has been systematically practiced over a number of years against recalcitrant suspects under interrogation by the SAVAK." However, human rights organizations of the West remained silent due to growing relationship between Tehran

- and Washington. Since 1973 when the Shah took aggressive oil policy and showed a changed attitude towards Israel, the US-influenced Human Rights groups became vocal against the past human records of the Shah. In this context, the US government began to distance the Shah highlighting human rights violation. For more see: James A. Bill, *The Eagle and the Lion: ...*, *op. cit.*, pp. 186-187; Dilip Hiro, *Iran under the Ayatollahs*, *op. cit.*, p. 36; *New York Times*, May 28, 1976; Hossein Bashiriyeh, *The State and Revolution in Iran, 1962-1982*, *op. cit.*, p. 50; Ali-Reza Nobari, *Iran Erupts*, *op. cit.*
14. Eqbal Ahmed, 'What's Behind the Crises in Iran and Afghanistan', *Social Text*, No. 3, Autumn, 1980, pp. 45-48; Dihana Ishtar, *op. cit.*, p. 31.
  15. James A. Bill, *The Eagle and the Lion: ...*, *op. cit.*, pp. 200, 221.
  16. Fakhreddin Azimi, *The Quest for Democracy in Iran: ...*, *op. cit.*, pp. 180-184.
  17. For detail see: Michael M. J. Fischer, *Iran: From Religious Dispute to Revolution*, The University of Wisconsin Press, London, 1980, pp. 189-207; James A. Bill, 'Iran and the Crisis of '78', *Foreign Affairs*, Vol. 57, No. 2, Winter, 1978, p. 342. John D. Stempel, *Inside the Iranian Revolution*, *op. cit.*, p. 76.
  18. Saiyid Athar Abbas Rizvi, *Iran: ...*, *op. cit.*, p. 242; Thomas M. Ricks, "Power Politics and Political Culture: US-Iran relations", *op. cit.*, p.165.
  19. Fred Halliday, 'The Genesis of the Iranian Revolution', *op. cit.*, p. 12.
  20. *Mission for My Country*, *op. cit.*, pp. 246-247.
  21. Kuross A. Samii, *Involvement by Invitation: ...*, *op. cit.*, p. 152; Amin Saikal, *The Rise and Fall of the Shah: ...*, *op. cit.*, pp. 50-51.
  22. Kristen Blake, *op. cit.*, pp. 99-100.
  23. See: Vali Nasr, 'Politics within the Late-Pahlavi State: ...', *op. cit.*, pp. 103-104; Helmut Richards, 'America's Shah Shahanshah's Iran', *op. cit.*, p. 6.
  24. Barry Rubin, *Paved with Good Intentions: ...*, *op. cit.*, p. 151.
  25. James A. Bill, *The Eagle and the Lion: ...*, *op. cit.*, pp. 368-374.
  26. René Theberge, 'Iran: Ten Years after the "White Revolution"', *Middle East Research and Information Project (MERIP)*, No. 18, June, 1973, p.11.
  27. Dilip Hiro, *Iran under the Ayatollahs*, *op. cit.*, p. 55; Peter Avery (ed.), *The Cambridge History of Iran*, vol. 7, *op. cit.*, p. 283.
  28. Roy Parviz Mottahedeh, 'Iran's Foreign Devils', *Foreign Policy*, No. 38, Spring, 1980, p. 30; John P. Miglietta, *op. cit.*, p. 71; David Farber, *Taken Hostage: ...*, *op. cit.*, p. 108.
  29. James A. Bill, *The Eagle and the Lion: ...*, *op. cit.*, p. 126.
  30. Hossein Fardoust, *The Rise and Fall of Pahlavi Dynasty: ...*, *op. cit.*, p. 452.
  31. Morteza Gharehbaghian, 'Oil Revenue and the Militarisation of Iran: 1960-1978', *Social Scientist*, Vol. 15, No. 4-5, April-May, 1987, p. 96.
  32. R. K. Ramazani, 'Irans Foreign Policy: Contending Orientations', *Middle East Journal*, Vol. 43, No. 2, Spring, 1989, p. 203; Nikki R. Keddie, *Modern Iran: ...*, *op. cit.*, p. 164.
  33. John D. Stempel, *Inside the Iranian Revolution*, *op. cit.*, p. 80.
  34. Elizabeth Shakman Hurd, 'The International Politics of Secularism: U.S. Foreign Policy and the Islamic Republic of Iran', *Alternatives: Global, Local, Political*, Vol. 29, No. 2, 2004, p. 124.
  35. Amin Saikal, *The Rise and Fall of the Shah: ...*, *op. cit.*, pp. 57-58.
  36. See: "Imam Khomeini—The Man Who Changed The World", *BBC Documentary*, available at: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=FfrJ2rBobGs>
  37. The famous Iranian writer and former Tudeh member Jalal Al-e Ahmad (1923-1969), encouraged young people of Iran to join the new Islamic wave through his essays and books, which included *Gharbzadegi* meaning 'the plague from the West' better translated as Westoxication, a polemic against the Iranian enchantment with all things Western. Jalal Al-e Ahmad is famous for advocating a return to Islam and thus his *Gharbzadegi* or Westoxication spearheaded the search for Islamic roots in the 1960s. Later on, Westoxication became a common phrase on everyone's lips as life became increasingly foreign for ordinary Iranians—even those who themselves had been educated in the West, or were familiar with Western culture. For this issue see: al-e Ahmad, and Shariati (tr. Brad Hanson), 'The "Westoxication" of Iran: Depictions and Reactions of Behrangi', *International Journal of Middle East Studies*, Vol. 15, No. 1, February, 1983, pp. 1-23.
  38. William O. Beeman, *The "Great Satan" VS. The "Mad Mullahs": How the United States and Iran Demonize Each Other*, Praeger Publishers, London, 2005, pp. 125-126.
  39. Dilip Hiro, *Iran under the Ayatollahs*, *op. cit.*, p. 307. Reportedly, a local US Armed Forces radio and a television networks were also established in Iran which operated until 1976 when the Shah's regime requested to close the networks.

40. Dariush Zahedi, *The Iranian Revolution Then and Now: ... , op., cit.*, p. 78.
41. Fred Halliday, 'Genesis of the Iranian Revolution', *op., cit.*, p. 12.
42. James A. Bill, *The Eagle and the Lion: ... , op., cit.*, p. 380.
43. *Op., cit.*, p. 382.
44. James A. Bill, *The Eagle and the Lion: ... , op., cit.*, pp. 381-389.
45. The Shiraz Arts Festival began in 1967 as a showcase for the royal court, especially Empress Farah Diba, a former architectural student, who convened each year's events.
46. Gholam Reza Afkhami, *The Life and Times of the Shah, op., cit.*, pp. 418-420.
47. Anthony Parsons, *Pride and the Fall*, London, 1982, pp. 54-55, mentioned in Fakhreddin Azimi, *The Quest for Democracy in Iran: ... , op., cit.*, p. 205. After this provocative and vulgar performance when Parsons mentioned this to the Shah and added that if the same play had been put on in the main street of Winchester (a city and county town of Hampshire, England), the actors and sponsors would have found themselves in trouble, the Shah was seen laughing indulgently.
48. A. Christian van Gorder, *Christianity in Persia and the Status of Non-Muslims in Iran*, Lexington Books, UK, 2010, pp. 170-171; Saiyid Athar Abbas Rizvi, *Iran: ... , op., cit.*, p. 347; Masih Muhajeri, *Islamic Revolution: Future path of the nations*, Published by the External Liaison Section of the Central Office of Jihad-e-Sandegi, Tehran, 1983, p. 27.
49. Nikki R. Keddie, *Modern Iran: ... , op., cit.*, pp. 135, 189; Robert Gluck, 'The Shiraz Arts Festival: Western Avant-Garde Arts in 1970s Iran', *Leonardo*, Vol. 40, No. 1, 2007, p. 27.
50. Eric Rouleau, 'Khomeini's Iran', *op., cit.*, p. 5; G. Bhagat, 'Khomeini: Leader of Islamic Revolution in Iran', *The Indian Journal of Political Science*, Vol. 48, No. 1, January-March 1987, p. 38.
51. Saiyid Athar Abbas Rizvi, *Iran: ... , op., cit.*, p. 309; Michael M. J. Fischer, *Iran: ... , op., cit.*, pp. 195, 208.
52. Ervand Abrahamian, *Khomeinism, op., cit.*, p. 30; Francis Robinson (ed.), *The New Cambridge History of Islam*, Vol. 5, *op., cit.*, p. 494.
53. Maryam Panah, *The Islamic Republic of Iran and the World: Global Dimensions of the Iranian Revolution*, Pluto Press, London, 2007, p. 51.
54. R. K. Ramazani, 'Who Lost America? The Case of Iran', *op., cit.*, pp. 16-17.
55. Imam Khomeini, *Islam and Revolution* (edited and annotated by Hamid Algar), Mizan Press, Berkeley, 1981, pp. 177-180.
56. *Islamic Republic of Iran Today, 1987*, Islamic Propagation Organization, Tehran, 1987, p. 69.
57. Saiyid Athar Abbas Rizvi, *Iran: ... , op., cit.* p. 262; James A. Bill, *The Eagle and the Lion: ... , op., cit.*, p. 152.
58. Daniel E. Harmon, *Ayatollah Ruhollah Khomeini*, Chelsea House publishers, USA, 2005, p. 40.
59. Barry Rubin, *Paved with Good Intentions: ... , op., cit.*, p. 111.
60. Ruhollah Khomeini, *Islam and Revolution: Writings and Declarations of Imam Khomeini*, (Trans. & annotated by Hamid Algar), Berkeley, California, Mizan Press, 1981, pp. 181-182; Baqer Moin, *Khomeini: Life of the Ayatollah*, Thomas Dunne Books, St. Martin's Press, New York, 2000, p. 118; Saiyid Athar Abbas Rizvi, *Iran: ... , op., cit.*, p. 264 James A. Bill, *The Eagle and the Lion: ... , op., cit.*, pp. 159-160. See also: *Sahifa-e Imam* (The Complete Works of Imam Khomeini), Vol. 1, The Publication Institute of Imam Khomeini, 1378, pp. 415-422.
61. James A. Bill, *The Eagle and the Lion: ... , op., cit.*, p. 159.
62. See: R. K. Ramazani, 'Who Lost America? The Case of Iran', *op., cit.*, p. 15.
63. Baqer Moin, *Khomeini: ... , op., cit.*, p. 120.
64. Ruhollah Khomeini, *Islam and Revolution: ... , op., cit.*, p. 185.
65. Quoted in Fakhreddin Azimi, *The Quest for Democracy in Iran: ... , op., cit.*, p. 184.
66. Ruhollah Khomeini, *Islam and Revolution: ... , op., cit.*, p. 197.
67. Eric Rouleau, 'Khomeini's Iran', *op., cit.*, p. 6.
68. Fakhreddin Azimi, *The Quest for Democracy in Iran: ... , op., cit.*, p. 211.
69. A. Christian van Gorder, *Christianity in Persia and the Status of Non-Muslims in Iran*, Lexington Books, UK, 2010, pp. 170-171.
70. Barry Rubin, *Paved with Good Intentions: ... , op., cit.*, p. 200; Gholam Reza Afkhami, *The Life and Times of the Shah, op., cit.*, p. 449.
71. Uncle Sam is a common national personification of the US government or the US in general.
72. Babak Ganji, *Politics of Confrontation: ... , op., cit.*, p. 26.
73. *Op., cit.*, p. 17; Gary Sick, *All Fall Down: ... , op., cit.* p. 34.
74. See: Betty Glad, 'Personality, Political and Group Process Variables in Foreign Policy Decision-Making: Jimmy Carter's Handling of the Iranian Hostage', *International Political Science Review*, Vol.10, No. 1, January, 1989, p. 54.

75. In fact, since the very beginning of the Camp David talks Arab nations namely Algeria, Iraq, Libya, Syria and South Yemen vehemently opposed and on December 2-5, 1977, representatives from these countries and the PLO meet in Libya to discuss ways of stopping the Israeli-Egyptian peace process.
76. Hoveyda spoke: "In the troubled seas of the Middle East, Mr. President, Iran stands on an island of stability and progress." Hoveyda made the statement at a time when Iran-US special relations were at their height. Rouhollah K. Ramazani, *Iran's Foreign Policy, 1941-1973: ..., op., cit.*, p. 365.
77. James A. Bill, 'Iran and the Crisis of '78', *op., cit.* p. 339; James A. Bill, *The Eagle and the Lion: ..., op., cit.*, p. 233.
78. Fred Halliday, 'The Genesis of the Iranian Revolution', *op., cit.*, p. 12.
79. Robert Wright, *Our Man in Tehran*, Harper Collins Publishers Ltd., Canada, 2011, pp. 17-19; Thomas G. Paterson et. el., *American Foreign Relations: A History since 1895*, Vol. 2, Wadsworth Cengage Learning, Boston, USA, 2009, p. 408; Alexander Moens, 'President Carter's Advisers and the Fall of the Shah', *Political Science Quarterly*, Vol. 106, No. 2, Summer, 1991, p. 215.
80. Dilip Hiro, *Iran under the Ayatollahs*, *op., cit.*, p. 71.
81. Said Amir Arjomand, *The Turban for the Crown: ..., op., cit.*, p. 114. Reportedly, after the massacre the Shah wept before the cabinet and the generals whom he sharply rebuked.
82. Robert Sherrill, 'Hostages', *Grand Street*, vol. 5, No.1, Autumn 1985, p. 140.
83. Nicholas M. Nikazmerad, *op., cit.*, p. 336; John D. Stempel, *Inside the Iranian Revolution, op., cit.*, p. 137.
84. Safiuddin Joarder, 'The Camp David Agreements: Genesis and Geopolitics', *The Dhaka University Studies*, Part A, Vol. 43, No. 1, June 1986, p. 66.
85. James A. Bill, *The Eagle and the Lion: ..., op., cit.*, p. 259.
86. For example, on October 31, 1978, Crown Prince Reza Cyrus visited the White House, President Carter told the latter: "Our friendship and our alliance with Iran is one of the important bases on which our entire policy depends." Later, on November 3, 1978, National Security Advisor Zbigniew Brzezinski had called the Shah to urge him to take a hard line. The reluctant Shah sought US help in this regard as a last resort, but did not receive confirmation of the message from Ambassador Sullivan on the following day.
87. Gary Sick, *All Fall Down: ..., op., cit.*, p. 4.
88. William Engdahl, *A Century of War: ..., op., cit.*, pp. 171-172.
89. Saiyid Athar Abbas Rizvi, *Iran: ..., op., cit.*, p. 338.
90. John D. Stempel, *Inside the Iranian Revolution, op., cit.*, p. 289.
91. James A. Bill, *The Eagle and the Lion: ..., op., cit.*, p. 248.
92. Nikki R. Keddie, 'The Iranian Revolution and the U.S. Policy,' *Op., Cit.*, p. 21
93. President Carter also ignored George Ball's recommendation of November 30, 1978 which urged Washington to drop support for the Shah of Iran and like Sullivan he strongly urged the President to open a disavowable channel of communication to Ayatullah Khomeini in Paris.
94. Michael M. J. Fischer, *Iran: ..., op., cit.*, pp. 204-205; Dilip Hiro, *Iran under the Ayatollahs, op., cit.*, pp. 84-85; John D. Stempel, *Inside the Iranian Revolution, op., cit.*, p. 150.
95. Dilip Hiro, *Iran under the Ayatollahs, op., cit.*, pp. 84-85; John D. Stempel, *Inside the Iranian Revolution, op., cit.*, p. 150.
96. John D. Stempel, *Inside the Iranian Revolution, op., cit.*, p. 152; Dilip Hiro, *Iran Under the Ayatollahs, op., cit.*, pp. 1, 314; Nicholas M. Nikazmerad, *op., cit.*, p. 340.
97. Said Amir Arjomand, *The Turban for the Crown: ..., op., cit.*, p. 130; John D. Stempel, *Inside the Iranian Revolution, op., cit.*, p. 152.
98. Babak Ganji, *Politics of Confrontation: ..., op., cit.*, pp. 93-95.
99. *Bulletin of the Atomic Scientists*, January 1979, Vol. 35, No. 1, p. 51.
100. Nicholas M. Nikazmerad, *op., cit.*, p. 343; John D. Stempel, *Inside the Iranian Revolution, op., cit.*, p. 152; Hossein Fardoust, *The Rise and Fall of Pahlavi Dynasty: ..., op., cit.*, p. 492.
101. Edward W. Said, *Covering Islam: ..., op., cit.*, p. Ixix; Hossein Fardoust, *The Rise and Fall of Pahlavi Dynasty: ..., op., cit.*, p. 516; Babak Ganji, *Politics of Confrontation: ..., op., cit.*, pp 98, 126.
102. Barry Rubin, *Paved with Good Intentions: ..., op., cit.*, p. 240.
103. Dilip Hiro, *Iran under the Ayatollahs, op., cit.*, p. 315; Barry Rubin, *Paved with Good Intentions: ..., op., cit.*, p. 247; John D. Stempel, *Inside the Iranian Revolution, op., cit.*, p. 162.
104. Michael M. J. Fischer, *Iran: ..., op., cit.*, p. 210; Barry Rubin, *Paved with Good Intentions: ..., op., cit.*, p. 243.
105. Nicholas M. Nikazmerad, *op., cit.*, p. 345.



# **Chapter 4**

## **Iran-US Relations: The Khomeini Era (1979-1989)**

### **Introduction**

The 1979 Iranian Islamic Revolution is a watershed event in the history of Iran-US relations. From 1979 to date Iran-US relations are generally considered as critical, troubled and unsettled. Upon the victory of the Islamic Revolution in 1979 when the US-installed and-supported Shah fell from power, Iran's relation with the US plunged through a long and fathomless dark tunnel, out of which it has not emerged yet. The previous chapter concludes with the study that Iranians not only resented the US unwanted intervention in their politics, foreign affairs, economy, society and culture since 1953 activities in Iran, but also rejected them through the Islamic Revolution of 1979. Iranian rejection of such US political, economic and socio-cultural domination of their country gave a new dimension to the ongoing history of Iran-US relations since 1979. In the revolutionary aftermath, new political realities (for example, the Islamic Republic's adoption of an independent set of international relations goals, summed up in the phrase "neither East nor West" etc.) began to surface while older animosities including anti-Americanism were revived in Iran with multi-dimensional implications both for Iran and the US resulting in more hostility of Iran-US relations. Therefore, the post-revolutionary history of Iran-US relations has become in large part a history of Iran-US hostility, confrontation, and demonization.

The present chapter which covers the Khomeini era (1979-1989) first critically looks at how the 1979 Islamic Revolution turned Iran from a long-standing US ally to a formidable enemy plus the attitudes of both the Islamic Republic of Iran and the US towards each other in the wake of the Islamic Revolution. It also examines the Iran-US relations during the Hostage Crisis of 1979-1981. Finally, it analyses Iran-US relations during the eight-year Iran-Iraq War that came in the wake of the Hostage Crisis. The chapter is, therefore, organized in three sections as listed below.

- Section I      The Revolutionary Government and Iran-US Relations up to November 1979**
- Section II     The Hostage Crisis (1979-1981) and the New Dimension in Iran-US Hostility**
- Section III    Iran-US Relations during and after the Iran-Iraq War: 1980-1989**

## **Section I**

### **The Revolutionary Government and Iran-US Relations up to November 1979**

The critical discussion of this section that follows will concentrate mostly on Iran-US relations during the nine months period from February 5, 1979 to November 4, 1979 when Khomeini-appointed Revolutionary Government led by Mehdi Bazargan (1908-1995) took charge of Iran. The section then looks into the factors involved in the initial hostility between Iran and the US since the victory of Islamic Revolution. As mentioned in the previous chapter that immediately after the Shah's regime collapsed, US officials and policy-makers in Washington quickly moved to restore a sort of US dominance in the post-Shah Iran. Sending of a veteran military expert by the name of General Huyser to Tehran in early January 1979 demonstrates this fact. Washington's hope was that the US-trained ex-Shah's military and massive US arms supply would be able to subdue the Iranian revolutionary forces in the event of establishing of an anti-American Islamic regime in Tehran.<sup>1</sup> That is, General Huyser was in Iran since January 4, 1979 to hold the Iranian military together for a future coup d'état which might ensure a pro-American government in post-Shah era. Therefore, when Iran lost to Imam Khomeini (whom Washington saw very negatively even before the revolution triumphed), the US Embassy in Tehran continued to operate amid all the uncertainty and its personnel and CIA agents covertly tried their best to create relationships with Iran's new powerbrokers in the Khomeini-appointed Revolutionary Government.<sup>2</sup> This was exactly the early US attitude towards the Islamic Revolution of Iran while its policy of isolating Khomeini continued. Conversely, it is striking fact that although the Islamic Revolution took place with anti-American sentiment but there was very little anti-American rhetoric in Khomeini's public speeches until a week or two into the Hostage Crisis which began on November 4, 1979.<sup>3</sup> The reason was quite clear: the Islamic Revolution needed recognition and support from the US to survive.

In spite of such initial attitudes of the revolutionaries and their leader Khomeini towards the US, hostility began to surface between revolutionary Iran and the US from the very start of the success of the Islamic Revolution. On February 5, 1979, Khomeini appointed Mehdi Bazargan the first Prime Minister of the revolutionary regime as opposed to the Shah-appointed Prime Minister Shahpour Bakhtiar to work with a shadowy Revolutionary Council. This alarmed the US a great deal because Khomeini's opposition to the Bakhtiar government left the US strategically naked and without a safety net. Given this situation, the Carter administration covertly engaged in Iran for developing relations with the liberal figures in the revolutionary government bereft of Khomeini. The CIA agents working from the US Embassy in Tehran (since the CIA station of the US Embassy in Tehran was on the second floor of the chancery) got some reliable figures including Khomeini-appointed Prime Minister Mehdi Bazargan. Therefore, with Bazargan's

appointment although Bakhtiar's days were numbered and Washington's hope of restoring influence in post-revolutionary Iran was shaken, however, this did not end Washington's hope in Iran at all. Meanwhile, when Iran's US-trained and armed military force of nearly 413,000 men showed total sign of disobedience to Bakhtiar and the chief of general staff announced that the military would not take side in the struggle between Bakhtiar and the Revolutionary Council, with these the final pillar of support on which the US-backed Shah's monarchy and the Shah-appointed Bakhtiar government rested was removed forever, and on February 11, 1979, the Islamic Revolution reached its culmination.

Once the Islamists led by Imam Khomeini were in power and the Islamic Revolutionary Government in place, a new phase of Iran-US relations proved inevitable. In a changed perspective, the US quickly moved to reevaluate its policy towards Iran. President Carter convened a hurried news conference on the same day and said: "I believe the people of Iran and the government will continue to be our friends."<sup>4</sup> He also stated that the US had been in touch with the people in charge of the Iranian government and expected to work with them hoping for very productive and peaceful cooperation. The following day a State Department spokesman confirmed that the new regime in Tehran had accepted President Carter's offer of cooperation and had asked that Iran and the US continue mutual relations.<sup>5</sup> Meanwhile, when US hope of restoring a pro-American government narrowed down, it quickly went to recognize the new government of Mehdi Bazargan following the path of Pakistan, the Soviet Union, and Morocco. However, the US recognition did not include the Leader of the Islamic Revolution Ayatullah Imam Khomeini and his Islamic Republic. For that although Khomeini had always been suspicious of US intentions towards the Islamic Revolution,<sup>6</sup> he issued strong orders to evict 150 leftist Iranian students when they attacked the US Embassy on February 14, 1979, held hostage the embassy personnel, including Ambassador William H. Sullivan at gunpoint for nearly two hours. The event actually demonstrates two important things: first, Khomeini's portrayal of US in "Great Satan"<sup>7</sup> was a term of warning rather than an absolute condemnation,<sup>8</sup> and second, he was willing to establish a sort of workable relationship with the "Great Satan" for practical reasons. As stated, Khomeini believed that US recognition was needed for the survival of the Islamic Revolution and for the revolutionary regime. Another reason was vital in nature: to keep the wheel of economy of the post-revolutionary Iran moving, as Iran's economy was stagnant since the start of the revolutionary movement against the Shah back in 1977.

Conversely, the US continued to avoid developing contacts with Khomeini as part of US policy of isolating him. As part of this policy, Americans mostly CIA officials in Iran were seen working ceaselessly to establish a sort of relationship with the moderates in the Islamic government even if risking unmaking the Islamic Revolution.<sup>9</sup> This presence of CIA's agents in Iran only increased anti-Americanism in the wake of the revolution. It is beyond doubt that there was a failure on the

part of US government to appreciate Khomeini's decisive role in the revolution and its aftermath, and to establish meaningful contacts with him when it might have made a difference for US policy and of Iran-US relations since 1979. As examined previously, because of Khomeini's Islamic and anti-US credentials the US government did not approach to him; rather it hoped for a pro-American moderate revolutionary government in post-revolutionary Iran and overtly adopted non-interference policy in Iran but covertly tried to bring the post-revolutionary situation in Iran into its favour at all costs by isolating Khomeini in the post-revolutionary Iranian politics.<sup>10</sup> This time the Carter administration which was sympathetic towards the autonomy-seeking Kurds in northern Iran<sup>11</sup> might have supported their uprising against the revolutionary government in the hope that military needs for US supplies to the Iranian armed forces to control the Kurdish rebellion would lead Prime Minister Mehdi Bazargan to normalize or improve Tehran-Washington relations. For his part, Bazargan was quite willing to maintain normal diplomatic relations with the US as long as the latter honoured Iran's independence and sovereignty. This willingness led Bazargan and his associates to maintain close and direct contact with US government officials.<sup>12</sup> However, because of anti-revolutionary stance of the US, the government of Prime Minister Mehdi Bazargan faced uphill difficulty to maintain close relations with the US officials in Iran and to improve Iran's relations with the US. By the same token, as will be seen later, the successor governments of Bazargan were not prepared to maintain close ties with the US.<sup>13</sup>

It is pertinent to state that US contacts with Bazargan's provisional government remained good but limited and chiefly secret. As a result, most revolutionaries, specifically the leftists continued to be deeply suspicious of US intentions in post-Shah Iran. John D. Stempel, a political secretary at the US Embassy during the revolutionary period, has documented that wild rumors circulated about coups, Shah-loyalists hidden armies, and SAVAK officials hiding on the 12-foot high brick-walled 27-acre US Embassy compound. Mindful of the 1953 CIA-instigated coup and in view of the many rumors centering US Embassy, the intense suspicion of US motives virtually required that there be some move against the Embassy. Against this backdrop, when the US decision to send helicopters and marines to Turkey for possible use in Iran became known, the Marxist revolutionaries first captured the US International Communication Agency building on February 13, 1979, and then seized the US Embassy the next day.<sup>14</sup> Khomeini forces cleared the Embassy and after the event a total of 6,000 Americans were evacuated between February 17 and 25. This reduction was for a short period. Before long, the US government sent scores of CIA agents to Iran with the stated motive to develop relationship with the moderates in the post-revolutionary Iran by sponsoring a policy of cautious support and increased contacts with them. To some, this kind of presence of the CIA agents and other Americans in Iran was politically dangerous for US, but that had taken place.

In fact, the presence of CIA agents and other Americans in Iran appeared as more damaging for normalizing or improving Iran-US relations in post-revolutionary Iran.<sup>15</sup> Iranians were appalled to see that suddenly the Americans were back and active in Iran. Therefore, both Khomeini and his followers were doubtful of the US motives at this stage of US involvement in Iranian moderates following the Islamic Revolution and thus the prospects of future Iran-US relations were at great risks. Meanwhile, on March 4, 1979, Iran broke diplomatic relations with the apartheid nation and US ally South Africa, and on March 13, 1979, Iran announced its intention to withdraw from the Central Treaty Organization (CENTO).<sup>16</sup> With this Iran ended the Shah's de facto alliance with the US. Subsequent Iranian actions also hugely antagonized the US. On April 1, 1979, following a referendum held on March 30-31, Khomeini declared Iran an Islamic Republic and called the day the "first day of government of God." A month later on May 1, 1979, Iran severed its ties with Egypt condemning Sadat's regime for establishing ties with Israel and making a pact. Khomeini, his followers and other common Iranians had a strong antipathy towards the US for exploiting Iran through SOFA since 1964. Therefore, on May 13, 1979, Tehran announced that the capitulations law has been rescinded. Meanwhile, as the internal opposition to the shaky new authorities continued, the revolutionary government began to arrest, jail and execute the enemies of the Islamic Revolution (chiefly ex-Shah regime's officials) in the name of revolutionary 'justice'.

The revolutionary government also handed capital punishment to many pro-American generals and politicians (for instance, on April 7, 1979, former Prime Minister Amir Abbas Hoveida was executed) who were closely associated with the fallen Shah. These actions antagonized Washington while the Western media took the opportunity to publish these executions terming them as atrocities of the new Islamic regime and thus highlighting the real face of Islam and Khomeinists. The US government began a propaganda campaign stating that a blood bath started in Iran, that Revolutionary Tribunals in Tehran executed innocent people without benefit of a trial. With regard to women, it was stated that women who did not wear proper *hijab* had had their breasts cut off on the Court's order.<sup>17</sup> Iran responded all these US machinations critically and pointed out that such US and Western propaganda was absent when the Shah's oppression and repression was common before the Islamic Revolution. At about the same time, another US political action heightened distrust between Tehran and Washington. As the US policy of developing relations with the moderate secularists avoiding any communication with Khomeini was not reaching momentum, a step was taken by US Charge d'Affaires to Iran Charles Naas to communicate with Khomeini.

But the attempt ended in complete failure when an ill-considered Senate resolution was passed condemning Iran's recent executions including a Jewish millionaire and close friend of the Shah named Habib Elghanian on the charge of corruption. Sponsored by a Republican member of the US Senate named Jacob Javits, an unwavering supporter of the Shah's regime and Shah's pro-

Israeli policy, the Senate took up a resolution on May 17, 1979 condemning Iran in the strongest possible terms for the revolutionary executions.<sup>18</sup> As a result, the May 17 Resolution precipitated a major crisis in Iran-US relations. To the revolutionaries, the Senate resolution was the concrete proof of US opposition to the Islamic Revolution. One observer has noted that Americans in Iran were extremely aware that any pro-Shah gesture on the part of the US government would ignite anti-American activities. In the midst of such delicate situation the May 17 Resolution had created an outpouring of anti-American vitriol in Iran and was widely seen as proof positive of the Americans' plan to reinstate the Shah.<sup>19</sup> Khomeini himself used the May 17 Senate Resolution as a prime example of US hypocrisy and hostility toward the Islamic Revolution. Khomeini accused the US of interference in Iranian internal affairs and sarcastically labeled Javits "a puppet of the Shah" for his wife, Marion, had been a Washington lobbyist for Iran Air during the Shah's reign and received payments from Iran Air for public relations work on its behalf (see Appendices).<sup>20</sup> Iranian reaction to the Senate resolution was strongly felt by the US when it decided to send a new Ambassador by the name of Walter Cutler to Iran but the Iranian Islamic leaders made it clear that they would not welcome Cutler to Tehran since he had interfered in the internal affairs of Zaire while he was US Ambassador there. In the history of Iran-US relations, only one US diplomat was thus threatened with being declared *persona non grata*.

On May 24-25, 1979, demonstrations were held throughout Iran against the US Senate resolution while thousands of demonstrators converged on the US Embassy in Tehran to protest the resolution. Dilip Hiro has mentioned that the main theme of the demonstrations was 'America is the number one enemy of the Islamic revolution'.<sup>21</sup> Then on May 26, Khomeini directly accused the US for recent assassinations and for attempting to kill the revolution through coup attempts. The revolutionary Iran's press also began accusing the US of blowing up railroads, killing villagers, aiding the Kurdish rebellion for autonomy through CIA agents and working with Iranian exile military leaders to bring back the Shah.<sup>22</sup> Under the circumstance, on June 4, 1979 when the US government raised the Cutler issue and declared that it was going to send Walter Cutler with the Ambassadorial assignment in Iran, Iran again refused to accept Cutler's appointment although it accepted Bruce Laingen as the US Charge d'affaires in Tehran. Amidst these volatile situations, on October 3, 1979, Iran's Foreign Minister Ibrahim Yazdi met with Secretary of State Vance New York. According to David Farber, they talked to work out a deal and the American side was eager to move forward so that a restored relationship with Iran although not in an ideal term, would prove that the Carter administration had not "lost" Iran. In his meeting with Vance Iran's Foreign Minister Yazdi insisted that the US government accept the revolution and should not seek the overthrow of the Khomeini-appointed government, extradite back to Iran the many high-level Shah-loyalist "criminals" who had made their way to the US, and return all monetary assets of the ex-Shah which actually belonged to the Iranian people.<sup>23</sup> Reportedly, in that meeting Yazdi had

been assured of that the US would not accept the Shah. Despite these developments, Iran-US relations did not go well.

In fact, the Iranian refusal to accept Cutler as US Ambassador made the super power so embarrassed and so angry that from then on US opposition to the Islamic Revolution under its leadership Ayatullah Khomeini became a fact and undermining the Islamic Revolution became a policy option. For example, in an interview with “Meet the Press” in October, 1979, Senator Henry Jackson publicly attacked on the Islamic Revolution. Reports were also available that the CIA officials in Iran continued to provide briefings to a very select group in Bazargan’s government. Such briefings took place on August 21, 1979 and October 15, 1979. The second session occurred only one week before the Shah was admitted into the US.<sup>24</sup> On October 22, 1979, in a sudden volte-face, the US government admitted the Shah into a US hospital for the treatment of his cancer. The US move eventually resulted in the Hostage Crisis of 1979-1981 (examined in the next section). There was no question that Khomeini felt offended by the Shah’s admission into the US. In a speech broadcast on Tehran radio on October 28, 1979, he declared: “All the problems of the East stem from these foreigners, from the West, and from America at the moment. All our problems come from America. All the problems of the Moslems stem from America.”<sup>25</sup> In the context of such Iran-US relations, on November 3, 1979, Iran repealed the Iran-US bilateral agreement of 1959. The damaging thing for Iran-US relations happened on November 4, 1979, when some Tehran University students stormed the US Embassy and held 52 Americans as hostages for 444 days. As the crisis between Iran and the US began over the hostage issue since November 4, 1979, Khomeini was able to consolidate the Iranian perception that the US was number one enemy while he moved to solidify the Islamic Revolution formally.

At this point we examine some specific factors that were responsible for initial Iran-US hostile relations since 1979. **Firstly**, the anti-Americanism which was the key element in the success of the Islamic Revolution remained widespread after the Islamic Revolution and was not confined to people who followed the clergy but it encompassed the whole population of Iran irrespective of their political ideology and class.<sup>26</sup>

**Secondly**, the power of Iranian anger at the US or anti-Americanism of the pre-revolutionary period was so strong that for practical and logical reasons it became an important and integral element in formulating the foreign policy of post-revolutionary Iran. The changes in Iranian foreign policy after the Islamic Revolution were vast. Whatever the historical judgment, the Shah during his time was an “American king” in the true sense of the term and his foreign policy was dictated by Washington anyway.<sup>27</sup> Conversely, the Islamic Republic of Iran based its foreign policy upon Khomeini’s famous dictum *na sharg nah gharb, faqat Jumhuri-yi Isalami* meaning “neither East nor West, only the Islamic Republic” which meant Islamic Iran strongly negated any

foreign domination in Iran and made great efforts to unite and befriend the governments who follow the same policy and help the deprived and oppressed nations.<sup>28</sup> In this way, Islamic regime completely rejected US influence in Iran's politics, economy and culture. Fundamentally, "cut off the hand of foreigners"—was the key goal of the Islamic Revolution later became the very determining factor of the post-revolutionary foreign policy in Iran. Since the US was the sole exploiting force in Iran from 1953 when the corrupt Shah co-operated with the US and vice versa, therefore, the revolutionary Iran considered the US as oppressive power and enemy of the Islamic Republic. Therefore, revolutionary Iran formulated its policy towards the US highlighting the following categories:

- a) No dependence on East or West;
- b) The designation of the US as the chief enemy—the "Great Satan";
- c) The struggle against the "Zionist enemy" and the liberation of Jerusalem;
- d) Support for all "oppressed peoples" everywhere, especially "oppressed" Muslims.<sup>29</sup>

**Thirdly**, Shah's overthrow in 1979 was a foreign policy catastrophe of tremendous proportion for Washington.<sup>30</sup> Henry Kissinger termed the "loss of Iran" as "the greatest single blow to the US foreign policy interests since the World War II."<sup>31</sup> Because the revolutionary government under Imam Khomeini's blessing first expelled all US military advisors and then ordered the Army of the Islamic Republic of Iran to take control of all American military bases in Iran.<sup>32</sup> Khomeini-appointed new revolutionary government even cancelled all arms deals with the US and other foreign powers. Then Iran cut off its political and economic relations with some important US allies like Israel, South Africa, and the Philippines. Iran also refrained from selling oil to those countries which the US viewed very negatively.

**Fourthly**, the Islamic Republic of Iran considered the US and its close ally Israel deadly enemies whom Khomeini called the "Great Satan" and "Little Satan" respectively. The derogatory term "Great Satan" used by Ayatollah Khomeini has come to mean a period in which the Shah did all misdeeds to Iranians with direct co-operation of the US. According to an analyst, accustomed to seeing their country as the most democratic and generous, Americans were extremely shocked to hear Iran's Khomeini call their country the "Great Satan".<sup>33</sup> This humiliating epithet has become a constant issue for the Iran-US hostile relations.

**Fifthly**, the non-acceptance of Islamic Revolution and its leader—Khomeini by the US was another factor for the initial Iran-US hostile relations. In essence, because of the consistent refusal of the US government to publicly acknowledge the Islamic Revolution<sup>34</sup> normal relationship between Tehran and Washington became impossible.



**Sixthly**, the presence of CIA in post-revolutionary Iran was another important reason for Iran-US hostile relations. The US built a very negative position of preponderant influence in Iran after the removal of Premier Mohammad Mosaddeq through the CIA-instigated coup d'état in 1953. During the Shah's time the CIA was both omnipresent and omniscient. After the collapse of the Bakhtiar government, Washington hastily moved to build a bridge with the moderates of the revolutionaries in a bid to restore a position in the country where a sort of US presence could be felt. As a result, the CIA clumsily became involved in Iranian affairs and thus covert activities of the CIA in post-revolutionary Iran continued complicating the Iran-US relations after the Shah's fall.<sup>35</sup>

**Seventhly**, the declaration of Iran as an Islamic Republic in April in 1979 and the adoption of Islamic Constitution in December in 1979 with disparaging remarks about the superpower US (see the conclusion chapter for detail) became one of the major points of contention between Iran and the US.<sup>36</sup>

**Eighthly**, ideological differences were one of the key factors with regard to the starting of hostile relations between Iran and the US since 1979. Following the victory of the Islamic Revolution, Khomeini in April declared Iran an Islamic Republic (and later in December 1979 adopted an Islamic constitution). Resultantly, Islamic values and ideas were put into practice in domestic and foreign policy affairs. This status of the Islamic Republic of Iran not only challenged US democratization and secularization and above all hegemony in the region, but also gave little cause for celebration in Washington. Policymakers in Washington viewed that the Islamic Revolution of Iran and the Islamic Republic as a whole threatened the link between secularization, modernization, and democratization, and in doing so, it threatened the national identity of the US itself.<sup>37</sup> This viewing played its due role to the initial hostile relations between Tehran and Washington continued.

**Ninthly**, the adoption of May 17 Resolution and the granting of the Shah's entrance into US on October 22, 1979, vastly deteriorated relations between the two countries and this actually transformed the prevailed limited Tehran-Washington relations into extreme hostile one.<sup>38</sup> About the May 17 Senate Resolution James A. Bill has expressly said that the resolution convinced the Iranian leaders of US hostile views toward their Islamic Revolution and many believe that the US Senate action was the first major event leading to the US Embassy take-over initiating the traumatic Hostage Crisis of 1979-1981 five months later.<sup>39</sup>

**Finally**, as Khomeini was representing political Islam since the success of the 1979 Islamic Revolution, he became a symbol of great pride to Shi'i and Sunni Muslims everywhere for having established an Islamic state and, perhaps especially, for having done so in the face of strong American opposition. Under the circumstance, policy-makers in Washington viewed Iran's

religious leaders as the clear danger to world peace and world economy. This actually led the US to adopt anti-Iran policy in the days, months and years following the Islamic Revolution.

In the light of above discussion, it may be concluded that Iran-US low-intensity hostile relations during the nine-month period of the revolutionary government from February 4, 1979 to November 4, 1979, are a cause-effect relationship.<sup>40</sup> In their relationship, the Islamic Republic of Iran remained anti-US for Washington's adversarial policies, while Washington remained hostile so long as Tehran showed antipathy towards Washington's interests including Israel. As time passed, other new factors added to the old ones making the on-going Iran-US hostile relations more hostile, tensed, full of dimensions and complicated. Particularly, the US decision to admit the Shah in US quickly resulted in the fourteen month-long Hostage Crisis of 1979-1981 which added more poison to the already hostile relationship between Iran and the US. It was against this context, the Iran-Iraq War (1980-1988) began. As time proceeded, the Iran-US relations began to take a definite, concrete hostile course during the later years and this course is still in practice. Interestingly enough, despite the placating promises about non-interference in the affairs of the Islamic Republic of Iran the Carter administration tried to destabilize it, and impose a government congenial to US interests.<sup>41</sup> This issue plus other related issues that impacted Iran-US relations hugely during the 1980s are examined in the two consecutive sections.

#### Notes and References of Section I of Chapter 4

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  2. See: Michael Charles Morton, "Engaging Iran: A Study of Modifying the United States of America's Foreign Policy Towards the Islamic Republic of Iran", Thesis, The University of Texas at Austin, 2001, pp. 19-20.
  3. Hooshang Amirahmadi (ed.), *The United States and the Middle East: A Search for New Perspectives*, State University Press, New York, 1993, p. 173
  4. Robert Dreyfuss, *Hostage to Khomeini*, New Benjamin Franklin House Publishing Company, New York, 1981, p. 1.
  5. John D. Stempel, *Inside the Iranian Revolution, op., cit.*, p. 182; Dilip Hiro, *Iran under the Ayatollahs, op., cit.*, p. 317.
  6. Baqer Moin, *Khomeini, op., cit.*, p. 214.
  7. "Satan" in Farsi "*Shaytan-i-Buzurg*", in Arabic "*al-Shaytan al-Kabir*" is the archetypal principality of evil, both in Islam (where his Quranic name is Iblis) and in Christianity (known also as Lucifer) alike. Khomeini disparagingly described the US as the "Great Satan" while its strong ally in the Middle East—Israel—as "Little Satan" meaning the US and Israel are permanent enemies of Iran, and Islam. Ayatullah Imam Khomeini, the Supreme Leader of the Islamic Republic of Iran, credited as the first "Islamist" government in the twentieth century, on November 5, 1979, demonized the US as "the Great Satan". The US became the Great Satan not in a sudden stroke at the taking of the hostages, but through a slow and steady process that began back in 1953. Russia was named the "Other Satan" and Britain the "Little Satan" other countries in the West have been variously branded as Little Satans, as has Israel.
  8. Ali. M. Ansari, 'Continuous Regime Change from Within,' *The Washington Quarterly*, vol. 26, no. 4, Autumn, 2003, p. 57.
  9. See: James A. Bill, *The Eagle and the Lion: ... , op., cit.*, pp. 271-286.
  10. For more see: James A. Bill, *The Eagle and the Lion: ... , op., cit.*, pp. 278-281.
  11. David Farber, *Taken Hostage: ... op., cit.*, p. 119.

12. James A. Bill, *The Eagle and the Lion: ...*, *op., cit.*, pp. 264--265.
13. Eric J. Hooglund, (ed.), *Twenty Years of Islamic Revolution: Political and Social Transition in Iran since 1979*, Syracuse University Press, New York, 2002, p. 158.
14. John D. Stempel, *Inside the Iranian Revolution*, *op., cit.*, pp. 183-184.
15. Lester H. Brune and Richard Dean Burns, *Chronological History of United States Foreign Relations*, vol. II (1933-1988), Routledge, USA, 2003, p. 870; John D. Stempel, *Inside the Iranian Revolution*, *op., cit.*, p. 189; James A. Bill, *The Eagle and the Lion: ...*, *op., cit.*, pp. 280, 290, 437.
16. Nikola B. Schahgaldian (with the assistance of Gina Barkhordarian), "The Iranian Military Under the Islamic Republic", Prepared for the Office of the Under Secretary of Defense for Policy Published by The RAND Corporation, March 1987, p. 123.
17. Masih Muhajeri, *op., cit.*, p. 82.
18. James A. Bill, *The Eagle and the Lion: ...*, *op., cit.*, pp. 283-284.
19. David Farber, *Taken Hostage: ... op., cit.*, p. 126.
20. John D. Stempel, *Inside the Iranian Revolution*, *op., cit.*, p. 216.
21. Dilip Hiro, *Iran under the Ayatollahs*, *op., cit.*, p. 318.
22. For more see: John D. Stempel, *Inside the Iranian Revolution*, *op., cit.*, p. 215.
23. David Farber, *Taken Hostage: ... op., cit.*, p. 119.
24. For more see: James A. Bill, *The Eagle and the Lion: ...*, *op., cit.*, pp. 284-292.
25. Roy Parviz Mottahedeh, 'Iran's Foreign Devils', *op., cit.*, p. 30.
26. Richard W. Cottam, 'The United States, Iran and the Cold War', *op., cit.*, 1970, p. 3; Fred Halliday, 'The Genesis of the Iranian Revolution', *op., cit.*, p. 4.
27. R. K. Ramazani, 'Who Lost America? The Case of Iran', *op., cit.*, p. 61.
28. Masih Muhajeri, *op., cit.*, p. 130.
29. Gawdat Bahgat, *Israel and the Persian Gulf: Retrospect and Prospect*, University Press of Florida, USA, 2006, p. 18.
30. James A. Bill, *The Eagle and the Lion: ...*, *op., cit.*, pp. 216, 257; Christin Marschall, *Iran's Persian Gulf Policy from Khomeini to Khatami*, *op., cit.*, p. 12.
31. Quoted in Dilip Hiro, *Iran under the Ayatollahs*, *op., cit.*, p. 316. See also: Fred Halliday, 'The Genesis of the Iranian Revolution', *op., cit.*, p. 1.
32. Mohammed Ayoub (ed.), *The Middle East in World Politics*, Croom Helm, New York, 1981, p.166; Masih Muhajeri, *op., cit.*, p. 148.
33. Fawaz A. Gerges, *America and Political Islam: ...*, *op., cit.*, p. 42.
34. James A. Bill, *The Eagle and the Lion: ...*, *op., cit.*, p. 282.
35. *Op., cit.*, p. 416.
36. See: Rouhollah K. Ramazani, 'Document: Constitution of the Islamic Republic of Iran', *Middle East Journal*, Vol. 34, No. 2, Spring, 1980, p. 181.
37. Elizabeth Shakman Hurd, 'The International Politics of Secularism: ...', *op., cit.* p. 126.
38. Other subsequent regional events also contributed a great deal to the hostile relations between Iran and the US. For example, following the hostage taking in Tehran on November 4, 1979, a group of armed Islamists took over the Grand Mosque in Mecca, in Saudi Arabia on November 20, 1979, and held on for two weeks until they were bloodily suppressed. Around the world, mobs of Muslims, blaming this sacrilege on the Americans, took to the streets. In Tripoli, Libya, peoples burned the US Embassy to the ground while an attack on the US Embassy in Islamabad, Pakistan, left two Americans dead. The US watched these developments with much concern. The US government noticed how anti-American sentiment electrified the Muslims of other countries following the Iranian example. Christian Caryl, 'The Great Backlash: 1979' *Foreign Policy*, No. 173, July-August 2009, p. 55.
39. *The Eagle and the Lion: ...*, *op., cit.*, p. 285.
40. To be clear, US non-recognition of Islamic Revolution and its leader Ayatullah Imam Khomeini, the US condemnation of revolutionary actions in post-Shah Iran and US covert attempt to establish relations with the moderate secularists, Iran's anti-US position for America's previous wrongdoings to the Iranians before the Islamic Revolution and the Iranian reactions to that after the revolution, Tehran's anti-Israeli stance and US reaction to it, Khomeini's decision to turn Iran an Islamic Republic, adoption of Islamic Constitution, Khomeini's clarion call for overthrowing American-backed and corrupt government of the region and the US reactions to these, the US decision to admit the Shah into the US and many more factors were involved in this cause-effect Iran-US relationship.
41. Dilip Hiro, *Iran under the Ayatollahs*, *op., cit.*, p. 322.

## **Section II**

### **The Hostage Crisis (1979-1981) and the New Dimension in Iran-US Hostility**

#### **Introduction**

The previous section shows that the new status of Iran as the Islamic Republic of Iran following the 1979 Islamic Revolution radically changed the course of Iran-US relations. It was obvious that the subsequent months following the success of the revolution witnessed low-intensity hostile Iran-US relations. Relations between the two countries reached an all-time low on November 4, 1979, when some Iranian students took the possession of US Embassy in Tehran and held 52 Americans as hostage. History documents that the seizure of US Embassy in Tehran which resulted in an extraordinary episode of 444 days Hostage Crisis of 1979-1981, added a new dimension to the ongoing hostile relationship between Iran and the US. The Hostage Crisis with which the US fought an unsuccessful and unpleasant encounter with the Islamic Republic of Iran inaugurated the second phase of Iran-US hostile relations. Since the publications on the Hostage Crisis are huge and most of them focused Iranian crime without letting know that how the Iranian anger grew and how the US actions of 1953 resulted in the Hostage Crisis, therefore, the section requires a detail interpretation to understand the present hostility between Iran and the US. In order to have some impression how this single event traumatized Iran-US relations, one needs to understand the historical events of Iran-US relations from 1953 leading up to the Islamic Revolution of 1978-1979, then the policy actions taken by the US government towards the Islamic Revolution and its leadership. The survey of this section will follow the courses as put below:

- (a) How Far Iran and the US were Responsible for the Hostage Crisis**
- (b) The Shah's Entry into the US and the Storming of US Embassy**
- (c) The US Responses to the Hostage Crisis**
- (d) How Much the Hostage Crisis Affected the Iran-US Relations**

#### **(a) How Far Iran and the US were Responsible for the Hostage Crisis**

There is no doubt that by the US Embassy take-over which culminated in the Hostage Crisis of 1979-1981, the Islamic Republic of Iran took unprecedented international risks for the Hostage Crisis itself initiated a major foreign policy crisis of US with subsequent wide-ranging repercussions on Iran-US relations. Additionally, following the Hostage Crisis the US policy of isolating the Islamic Republic of Iran from the international community became the long-lasting weapon which is still in action. More importantly, the Hostage Crisis has been haunting the Iran-US bilateral relations in a more hostile way since 1979. Given this fact in view a crucial question may be asked: why did Iran take such risks of being an isolated nation on the planet and a

criminal or terrorist state in the eyes of the Americans, with the risk of breaking-up of Iran-US diplomatic relations?

Historically, the students' take-over of the US Embassy was in order to obliterate the channel of Western domination in Iran or to combat the US imperialism in Iran.<sup>1</sup> It is claimed that the motivation of the Iranian student revolutionaries was their fear of the return of the US presence and the re-imposition of the American culture upon Iran. That is why, on the surface, although the take-over of the Embassy appears to be a political problem, in essence, it is more related to the cultural aspect of the Islamic Revolution. However, by positioning in post-revolutionary Iranian context, some scholars have stated that the Hostage Crisis was as much a product of internal power struggle between Islamists and Marxist-Leninists as a show of rage against the US.<sup>2</sup> In line with such observation, Gary Sick has opined that it was for post-revolutionary Iran's own domestic agenda the Islamic Republic of Iran staged the episode and for that the Hostage Crisis was attributable more to internal developments in Tehran than to anything US. Judging the causes in the light of consequences of the Hostage Crisis, Sick has stated that Ayatullah Khomeini had designated the crisis as the "second Iranian Revolution", and exploited it to rid himself of troublesome secular elements within his own government and to mobilize mass support for a radical transformation of the political structure and leadership of the country, and so was the Hostage Crisis.<sup>3</sup>

It is true that the time when the Embassy seizure occurred the revolutionary government was busy in setting up of a new state with a new constitution and the structure of new government. More importantly, as mentioned in the previous section that it was the time when numerous parties and armed groups under the banner of right-wing and left-wing operating fiercely in Iran. Therefore, in post-revolutionary Iran where anti-American sentiment was at its peak due to US non-acceptance of the Islamic Revolution, while the country itself was on the verge of collapse into chaos and Iranians were aspiring a better standard of living and participatory form of government after the fall of the one-man ruler—the autocratic Shah, any such incident of hostage-taking entirely does not disapprove the above-mentioned claim of Gary Sick. But given the intricate nature of the Hostage Crisis, a relevant question is to be asked: to what extent were Iran and the US responsible for the Hostage Crisis? Answer of this question should be found out through the critical study of dynamics of Iranian and US politics of the time and the internal and external determinants of Iran-US relations. As pointed out in previous section that in the context of US non-acceptance of the Islamic Revolution and its principal leader—Khomeini, some CIA officials were seen busy in covert activities in post-revolutionary Iran.

Against this background, on February 14, 1979, US Ambassador William Sullivan along with his staff were taken hostage for a short time by the leftist revolutionaries. But the Americans were

rescued by the Khomeini's people despite all their heated rhetoric about "Death to America".<sup>4</sup> After the incident, Embassy staff including CIA agents had been reduced to about sixty from fourteen hundred but they began to filter back into Iran after a brief span of time despite the fact that the move was politically dangerous for US.<sup>5</sup> Reportedly, many were consistently working out of the Embassy turning it into a centre of American espionage.<sup>6</sup> The presence of CIA agents in post-revolutionary Iran, the secret nature of their activities (for example, secret meetings with some members of the Bazargan government) plus adoption of May 17 Senate resolution condemning revolutionary executions actually contributed to the final collapse of US credibility in post-revolutionary Iran. In this context, when the question of Washington's fallen ally ex-Shah's admission to US came under consideration the Carter Administration, President Carter himself argued: "Should the Shah come to the US it would be a disaster for Iran-US relations as well as for the safety of the Americans in Iran"<sup>7</sup> Even when President Carter's National Security Advisor Brzezinski had raised the matter of letting the Shah in US, President Carter reacted angrily to the suggestion, saying that "he did not want the Shah in the United States playing tennis while Americans in Tehran were kidnapped or killed."<sup>8</sup> Secretary of State Cyrus Vance, L. Bruce Laingen, the US Charge d'affaires in Tehran and Henry Precht, head of the Iran desk in the State Department also warned the President that Shah's entry into the US would seriously hamper the chances of normalizing Iran-US relations.<sup>9</sup>

Following the short-lived February 14 Embassy takeover, a study done by Embassy staffers in Tehran which concluded that "if the Shah were permitted to come to the United States, it would be seen by most Iranians as an indication that we intended to restore him to the throne and overturn the revolution."<sup>10</sup> On November 18 *The New York Times* and on December 10, 1979, *New York Magazine* reported that Washington government was fully aware that the Shah's entry into the US might well provide the excuse for sharp anti-Americanism and trigger violent adverse actions including the embassy takeover by the Iranians.<sup>11</sup> These all demonstrate that the Carter administration had prior knowledge that Iranians would do something unpleasant in reaction to allowing the Shah into the US. Yet the Carter administration took the risky decision of welcoming the Shah to the US. Therefore, above-mentioned facts unequivocally prove that the US was responsible for the Hostage Crisis and for making the Iran-US relations more hostile since November 1979.

#### **(b) The Shah's Entry into the US and the Storming of the US Embassy in Tehran**

As just mentioned above, by disregarding warning of different quarters the Carter administration accepted the Shah in the US. A careful and in-depth study shows that Carter's decision to allow the ex-Shah to US was the game of politics played on a global scale, for better or worse and it was Washington's calculated decision. That is why, President Carter increasingly took risks and

allowed the Shah to come to the US knowing full well that this move might be explosive and it could lead to retaliation against Americans in Iran.<sup>12</sup> The issue requires a brief explanation. The fall of the Shah and with him Iran to the hands of Islamists led by Imam Khomeini marked the total collapse of the “twin pillar” strategy in the Nixon Doctrine (in which Iran and Saudi Arabia were assigned to shoulder American responsibility in the Persian Gulf region as stated in previous section) in the region of primary American strategic concentration. Given the fact, with no shoes to stand on, President Carter tried to look for the John Foster Dulles worn-out brand of intervening in Iran. Basically, motivated by a hidden agenda of a 1953-like changeover in Iran<sup>13</sup> President Carter ignored the warnings of possible risks of the Shah’s admission into the US and allowed him in New York Presbyterian Hospital in the US on October 22, 1979, which provided the excuse for the seizure of the US Embassy in Iran on November 4, 1979.<sup>14</sup>

As expected, immediately after the Shah had arrived in the US spread in Iran a million or more people gathered to protest in Tehran. They insisted that by allowing the Shah to enter the US the Americans had started a new conspiracy against the Islamic Revolution. Since then marches and protests became regular features and they aimed at the US Embassy with the emotionally-charged slogan—“*Marg bar Amrika!*” meaning Death to America.<sup>15</sup> James A. Bill in his masterful history of Iran-US relations *The Eagle and the Lion: The Tragedy of American-Iranian Relations* has correctly pointed out that the momentous decision of the US government to accept the Shah led directly to a new era in Iran-US relations—an era dominated by extremism, distrust, hatred, and violence.<sup>16</sup> In a sharp reaction to the US decision, the revolutionary government of Iran closed the Iranian Embassy in Washington D.C. for one day. Tehran government then requested the US government that the Shah be treated outside of New York and that Iranian doctors have the opportunity to examine the Shah, and that his visit be as brief as possible. The acting chief of the Political Division of the Minister of Foreign Affairs by the name of Parsa Kia in a discussion with Charge d’Affaires Bruce Laingen at the Foreign Ministry in Tehran on October 31, 1979, attempted to convince him of the necessity that the Shah leave US immediately. He even indicated that the Bazargan government could not control the situation in Iran and that the Shah’s continued presence in the US could well result in the breaking of Iran-US relations. The US government turned a deaf ear to these requests and warnings.<sup>17</sup>

Iranians now saw in Shah’s admission to the US a potential mortal threat to their nascent Islamic Revolution, while their leader Khomeini got fumed. Khomeini considered the US decision to accept the Shah as provocative. John D. Stempel—political officer, then deputy chief of the political section and finally acting chief of the section in the US Embassy in Tehran during the revolutionary period—has observed that the Shah’s arrival in the US on October 22, 1979, renewed the Iranians’ fears of a counter-revolution.<sup>18</sup> Elsewhere in his book entitled *Inside the*

*Iranian Revolution* Stempel expressly stated: “Permitting the Shah to enter the U.S. set the stage for converting a nasty demonstration into an occupation [of US Embassy].”<sup>19</sup> While the author of *Taken Hostage: The Iran Hostage Crisis and America’s First Encounter with Radical Islam* David Farber has claimed that it is true that following the Shah’s departure on January 16, 1979, although the Soviet propaganda was fueling the Iranian sentiment that the US Embassy employees numbered 25,000 were busy to restore the Shah to his throne, however, most Iranian revolutionaries did not need Soviet propaganda to fuel their fears of US-sponsored coup that would bring the Shah back to Iran. They painfully remembered 1953 while their leader Khomeini warned them: “We will not let the United States bring the Shah back. ... This is what the Shah wants. Wake up. Watch out.”<sup>20</sup>

On October 31, 1979, upon Khomeini’s call three and a half million people protested the admission of the Shah into the US. They marched in Tehran with strong anti-American slogan “Death to America” as strong as it was during the revolutionary period of 1977-1979, to demand the Shah’s extradition from the US. Other instances of protest involved the holding of the Statue of Liberty in the US for three days by Iranian students and coast to coast demonstrations there. The Carter administration neither responded to these peaceful protests, nor to diplomatic representation. Amidst this tensed Iran-US relationship over the Shah’s admission into the US, revolutionary regime’s Prime Minister Bazargan, Foreign Minister Ibrahim Yazdi and Defense Minister Mustafa Chamran visited Algeria on the occasion of the anniversary of Algerian independence on November 1, 1979. Without Khomeini’s prior permission they met secretly and talked for hours in Algiers with Carter administration’s National Security Adviser Zbigniew Brzezinski, the prime underminer of the Islamic Revolution and the leading supporter of a 1953-style coup in post-revolutionary Iran. To some, they met to discuss Iran-US relations, however, Khomeini regarded the meeting with utmost suspicion. Khomeini, who well remembered the 1953 CIA-sponsored coup d’état against Iran’s former Prime Minister Mosaddeq, which restored the Shah to power, was fearful of a repeat performance against his newly established Islamic Republic.<sup>21</sup>

Earlier Khomeini rejected the leftists’ call to make anti-Americanism the focus of Iran’s foreign policy and issued strong orders to evict them from the US Embassy compound following their capture of the Embassy on February 14, 1979.<sup>22</sup> Khomeini changed his compromising attitude towards the US immediately after the Carter administration offered the Shah asylum in US. What remained in the mind of Khomeini and Iranian revolutionaries regarding Iran’s relations with the US following the revolution, it evaporated immediately after the US gave refuge the ex-Shah. Now the November 1 secret meeting of Prime Minister Bazargan-led Iranians delegations with the US high officials including the most hated person in Iran intensified Iranian fear of US



intervention in Iran. In fact, both events were seen in Tehran as part of a plan aimed at returning Iran to the sphere of American influence and pushing it in directions not desired by the revolutionaries.<sup>23</sup> It was against this background that the US Embassy in Tehran was seized on November 4, and when the hostages were taken the US responded with total outrage.<sup>24</sup>

Thus historically with the CIA-engineered 1953 coup fresh in mind, some Tehran University students stormed the US embassy in Tehran on November 4, 1979 chanting “Death to America!” and “Death to the Shah!” This action precipitated the 444-day-long Hostage Crisis in the history of Iran-US relations. Mostafa T. Zahrani has concluded that so traumatic was the 1953 coup’s legacy that when the Shah finally departed in 1979, many Iranians feared a repetition of 1953, which was one of the motives for the student seizure of the US Embassy.<sup>25</sup> This was reflected in the words of one of the leading figures of the hostage-takers and the group’s spokesperson named Massoumeh Ebtekar. She claimed, “We believed then that action was essential. We were determined to take a stand against past and possible future humiliation by the U.S.”<sup>26</sup> Hence, students stormed and occupied the US Embassy in Tehran viewing that this was a patriotic deed.<sup>27</sup> Supporting this view Iran analysts including Barbara Slavin, Sepehr Zabih and others strongly argue that in view of the events of 1953, Iranian revolutionaries feared a new US plot to intervene and thwart their aspirations for independence. Therefore, when the deposed Shah was permitted to enter the US for medical treatment, Iranian hatred for him and his US—the patron-cum ally erupted into mass demonstrations. These eventually culminated in the occupation of the embassy and the capture of its officials and staffs.<sup>28</sup>

The Iranian students did capture the US Embassy believing that the US was sheltering the Shah in exile and preparing to return him to power through its Embassy in Tehran, which was commonly known as the “Nest of Spies” or “Den of Spies”.<sup>29</sup> Khomeini was unaware of the Embassy takeover and when informed, he quietly expressed disapproval of the move and did not publicly back the hostage taking initially. To some, Khomeini was actually very angry at the students during the first three days of the takeover. The probable reason was that he might have felt that this action would provoke US intervention in Iran and thus jeopardize the revolution.<sup>30</sup> In line with Khomeini’s such initial view, Prime Minister Bazargan did wish to end the ordeal without delay since the takeover was poisoning Iran’s relations with the rest of the world, in particular with the US. But Iranian conservative revolutionary leaders decided to use the hostages as an instrument to induce the US to come to terms with its Iranian past. To that end, they began to convince Khomeini and it worked. Being fully convinced that the students’ occupation of US Embassy represented the wishes of the deprived masses, the Ayatullah threw his strong support behind the hostage-holders. Khomeini spoke on the issue after three days describing the seizure of the embassy as ‘the second revolution’ (consolidation of the revolution), which was more

important than the first revolution,” meaning the revolution that overthrew the Pahlavi monarchy.<sup>31</sup>

Meanwhile, on November 5, 1979, the government of pro-US secular moderate Prime Minister collapsed as it failed to release the hostages. To some, with it any US plan for reinstating the Shah had been nipped in the bud, and thus Iran was left to its own devices only to invite US reactionary policies in the latter years.<sup>32</sup> Because a convinced Khomeini now appeared content to capitalize upon the episode to humiliate the US for supporting what he saw as the Shah’s ‘crimes’ against the Iranian people; to maintain public support by fostering perpetual anti-American rage and to demonstrate his capacity as a strong and decisive leader in the post-revolutionary era. Khomeini was convinced that to combat these post-revolutionary challenges he needed an external enemy, one that could maintain the revolutionary fervour and allow him to win the competition for power. Khomeini got the long-desired external enemy in the US—the hated Great Satan—given the anti-US fervour of the Islamic Revolution. True to his expectation, the taking of American hostages quickly provided a unifying symbol of the Iranian Revolution and a rallying cry for the people of Iran to vent their anger at the US.<sup>33</sup>

### **(c) US Responses to the Hostage Crisis**

#### **I. Initial Helplessness: The Superpower’s Image at Stake**

It is now important to relate how the US responded to the Hostage Crisis of 1979-1981 and how the US responses affected ongoing Iran-US relations. Factually, the US responses to the hostage-taking and the subsequent crisis were serious, stern and ‘unprecedented’ and these responses were generally characterized by a superpower’s utter helplessness. Immediately after the Hostage Crisis began, President Jimmy Carter branded this act as ‘international terrorism’, and considered Islamic leaders as terrors and irrationals. On this very ground, the Carter administration strongly opposed early negotiations with Iran over the release of the hostages, for Washington did not want to set Iran what it considered a terrorist state and “outlaw nation”, in a relationship of seeming equality with the US.<sup>34</sup> However, in a November 6 Oval Office meeting President asked Secretary of State Cyrus Vance, NSC Advisor Brzezinski, Defence Secretary Brown and others to begin exploring all possible means, including military, for getting the hostages out of Iran safely.<sup>35</sup> The same day US former attorney general Ramsey Clark and a Farsi-speaking former Foreign Service officer, William Miller, were sent to Iran to meet with Khomeini for negotiations over the Hostage Crisis. Reportedly, Carter handwrote a letter directly to Khomeini, asking him to meet with the two Americans and arrange for the release of the American hostages. Much chagrin to Carter, Khomeini refused to see the American emissaries.<sup>36</sup> When the Clark-Miller mission failed, Carter grew impatient. He now tried a series of punitive actions against Iran

**Firstly**, President Carter began using the media in the US to help create a feeling of emergency in the US which suggested that the holding of hostages was a national security threat comparable to that posed by major powers in the past. Catherine V. Scott has claimed that there is ample evidence that the Carter administration initially used the Hostage Crisis to its advantage and attempted to manipulate media coverage that in turn deteriorated Iran-US relations. With government's support the US media published anti-Iranian sentiment regularly projecting hostage taking as an act of terrorism committed by Iranian revolutionary regime which only precluded an early settlement of the crisis.<sup>37</sup>

**Secondly**, on November 9 the US government halted the shipment of \$300 million in military spare parts purchased and paid by Iran before the revolution. **Thirdly**, on November 10, 1979, the US government, began special immigration checks on Iranian students in the US, and deportation proceedings against some 50,000 Iranian students who were living in the US illegally or who did not report to the proper officials, as they had been ordered to do. **Fourthly**, on November 12 Carter halted US oil trade with Iran by placing an embargo on all Iranian oil products which meant, the US stopped purchasing 750,000 barrels a day of oil which represented about 4% of its daily supply. **Fifthly**, on November 14 the President instructed US officials to freeze all Iranian assets and deposits held in US banks and in the branches of US banks overseas, between \$7 and \$8 billion. **Sixthly**, on November 29, 1979, the US asked the ICJ to order the release of the hostages.<sup>38</sup> Other US responses included the physical assaults on Iranians in the US were also reported while hundreds of thousands of Americans wrote letters to the Iranian Embassy in the US and the Iranian UN delegation. Dozens of anti-Khomeini songs including the fiery "Go to Hell Ayatullah" were played on the airwaves. While the personnel of the Iranian mission at the UN were restricted to within 25 miles of the UN building unless they had written permission from the State Department.<sup>39</sup>

The threat of force, too, was used as a back-up for US diplomacy in dealing with Iranian Hostage Crisis. Initially military actions on Iran was considered mainly in the hope that the success of the action might create an opportunity for Carter to win for the second time in the Presidential Election which was to be held in November of the following year. Moreover, a successful military action would restore America's national pride and punish Iran and deter others from tweaking Uncle Sam's beard. Such an act would certainly led military confrontation between Iran and the US. Eventually, the US abstained momentarily from taking military action against Iran considering high risks involved in it for the hostages themselves and other Americans in Iran. In late November when Khomeini had threatened to put the hostages on trial in an effort to force US to comply with Iranian demands of return of the Shah and his wealth, Carter's urged the Iranian government not to place any person attached to the US Embassy or Consulate in Iran on

trial but to restore the Embassy showing respect to the international law that supported US basic demand that Americans held captive be released. When it went unheeded, the Carter administration condemned Khomeini as a lawbreaker<sup>40</sup> and indicated that it might resort to the use of force if the hostages were not freed. Carter even ordered the *U.S.S. Kitty Hawk* to join the *U.S.S. Midway* and four other ships stationed in the Arabian Sea. As US warships began to patrol the Persian Gulf area, Iranian government issued threats to execute the US hostages in retaliation.<sup>41</sup> At about the same time, the US threat of force deepened Tehran's tension and fear of a US military intervention in Iran. Thousands of protestors, wearing white burial shrouds to make clear their willingness to die as martyrs if the US attacked, gathered in front of the US Embassy.

## II. The US Severs Diplomatic Relations with Iran

From the very beginning of the Hostage Crisis each statement Carter made regarding the hostages held in Iran only poisoned Iran-US relations by enhancing anti-Iranian feeling in the US. By December 1979, President Carter changed his position and hinted that he would not take any military action and on December 4, 1979, on US request, the UNSC passed Resolution 457 which called for the hostages to be set free and for Iran and the US to settle their differences peacefully. In response, in early February 1980, Iranian Foreign Minister Bani Sadr made it clear that the hostages could be released if the US admitted its "crimes" in the last 25 years, pledged non-interference in Iran, and recognized Iran's right to have the Shah extradited.<sup>42</sup> After this on US government's request Kurt Waldheim (1972-1981)—the fourth General-Secretary of the UN—visited Tehran with a UN-fact finding Commission in late February 1980 to resolve the hostage issue. However, Imam Khomeini rejected the Kurt Waldheim's mediation stating that "I do not trust this man".<sup>43</sup> Since early April of 1980 it became clear that diplomatic efforts had failed, and that there was no foreseeable end to the hostage ordeal. The US government became so impatient on the prolongation of the Hostage Crisis that a helpless Carter wrote personal letters to Khomeini (and President Bani Sadr) and sought help to release the hostages. Although this was a part of secret and 'confidential effort to end the impasse', the Iranian government made public the text of the letter Carter wrote to Khomeini.<sup>44</sup>

The irony of history is that back in 1953, Iran's nationalist Prime Minister Dr. Mosaddeq wrote a personal and confidential letter to President Eisenhower asking economic aid during the ongoing Iran's dispute with Britain over oil nationalization, however, as part of the US policy to weaken Mosaddeq's power base, the Eisenhower administration disclosed the contents of the letter in press despite the fact that Mosaddeq requested not to do so. Exactly 27 years after the US humiliating treatment with Mosaddeq, Khomeini did the same thing to the US President Jimmy Carter. Eventually, on April 7, 1980, an angry and impatient Carter because of growing criticism

in the US in a sharp reaction completely broke US diplomatic relations with Iran, invalidated all Iranian visas for future travel to the US, and implemented a tough economic embargo on Iran.<sup>45</sup> With this US move, a hundred years of Iran-US diplomatic relations came to an abrupt end. The US government explained that this action was taken following the seizure the US Embassy in Tehran and its staff on November 4, 1979, and the subsequent failure of the Iranian government to secure their release.

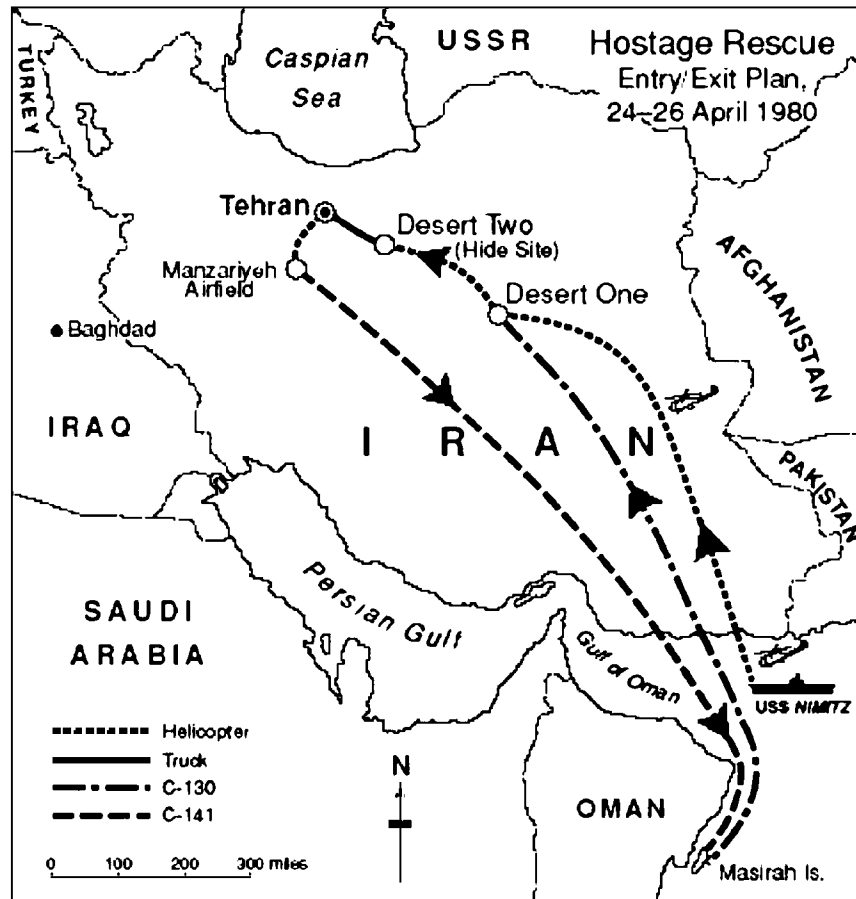
Following the US, its Western allies scaled back their ties with Iran leaving the country virtually isolated. As a punitive measure, on April 17, 1979, President Carter announced five more serious sanctions against Iran. These included the prohibition of travel to Iran by US citizens, the banning of all imports from Iran (about \$1 million a month), the embargoing of all exports, and the prohibition of financial transfers by persons subject to US jurisdiction.<sup>46</sup> The Islamic regime reacted positively to these new developments. Earlier on April 8, Khomeini characterized the US decision to break its diplomatic relations with Iran as a “good omen”. Khomeini said: “It has reviled a superpower, the bloodthirsty, to cut its ties, that is the end of its looting and robbery.”<sup>47</sup> He then called upon all Iranians to celebrate the severance of Iran’s diplomatic relations with the US—the Great Satan. It is pertinent to state that although the US severed diplomatic relations with Iran in 1980 but it did not immediately terminate the communication with Iran. Rather from April 7, 1980 onwards both Iran and the US have been maintaining limited official contact. Under this official contact, a US interests section at the Embassy of Switzerland in Tehran and an Iranian interests section at the Embassy of Pakistan in Washington, D.C., have been representing the bilateral issues of the two countries including indirect and unofficial communications when necessary.<sup>48</sup>

### **III. The “Operation Eagle Claw”: The First US Military Invasion of Iran**

The diplomatic breakup between Tehran and Washington soon paved the way for a US military option to rescue the hostages held in Iran. It is said that immediately after the Embassy takeover an elite team of US fighting men by the name of Delta Force led by Colonel Charlie Beckwith had begun training to rescue the hostages.<sup>49</sup> Following a special meeting of the NSC held on April 11, 1980, which decided that the US would go ahead with the military raid into Iran to rescue its citizens, the US military assured President Carter that rescue of the hostages was a realistic option. Eventually, as part of “a necessity and a duty”, as President Carter later claimed, and emboldened by the assurances (by the Commander of the Delta Force Beckwith) that the hostages would be rescued safely while the hostage-takers would be shot “right between the eyes” the President gave the go-ahead to the rescue plan—code-named “Operation Eagle Claw” which was tried on the night of April 24-25, 1980. Oddly enough, no sooner had the “Operation Eagle Claw” tried than it quickly went wrong and aborted owing to technical glitches and other

problems.<sup>50</sup> In this way, the greatest military power on earth, as the US government boastfully claimed, collapsed in the Iranian desert of Tabas and US image as a superpower was buried in Iran's *Dasht-e Kavir*. One scholar has lamentably put: "In short, the American eagle left a broken claw in the deserts of Iran in April 1980."<sup>51</sup>

**Figure 4.1** The Hostage Rescue Plan: how it was supposed to work



**Source:** David Patrick Houghton, *US Foreign Policy and the Iran Hostage Crisis*, Cambridge University Press, UK, 2004, p. 126; John Valliere, 'Disaster at Desert One: Catalyst for Change', *Parameters*, Autumn 1992, p. 71.

There is no dispute that the US failed military rescue mission "Operation Eagle Claw" heightened tension between Iran and the US considerably and turned the already delicate, estranged and low-intensity hostile Iran-US relations more hostile. This was for the first time in history 'a US military force had invaded Iran' and Iranians were entirely unaware of the American military raid in their country. They came to know the US military adventure only after Carter had announced the mission's failure on radio.<sup>52</sup> In his statement, although Carter termed it as a humanitarian mission which was directed neither against Iran nor against the people of Iran, and it was not undertaken with any feeling of hostility toward Iran or its people, but the Iranians government termed the raid as "the undeniable direct intervention of U.S."<sup>53</sup> After the US

military mission the US future in Iran can in no way be considered bright and so is the Iran-US relationship. Given the secret nature of the US military rescue mission in Iran, Iranian justifiably started believing that the US has been conspiring against their Islamic regime to unmake it. True to their belief, the US also attempted a second mission in the name of “Honey Badger” which was ‘more an invasion than a rescue mission’ involving 2,000 men of two battalions of Rangers, however, finally the mission was abandoned.<sup>54</sup> To many, these events also helped to put the Iranian Islamic Revolution on a more staunchly anti-US trajectory.<sup>55</sup>

After the military mission failed, only negotiations were left to secure the release of the American hostages and thus the Carter administration was left to the mercy of Khomeini to which Gary Sick calls ‘waiting for the Ayatollah’.<sup>56</sup> For his part, Imam Khomeini strongly condemned the US military mission. Although he claimed “God kept Iran from harm” and boastfully stated that ‘America cannot do a damn thing’,<sup>57</sup> however, he made it crystal clear that landing military forces in an independent country is an unforgivable crime. For that he now moved to prolong holding the hostages and force the Americans to pay a higher penalty for their past “sins” during the Shah’s time. In this context, on April 25, 1980, Khomeini harshly criticized President Carter and urged the Iranians to be united.<sup>58</sup> Meanwhile, despite the fact that during the time of Embassy seizing, US intelligence officials inside the Embassy rapidly shredded and burnt most confidential documents, the student captors of the hostages had secured some incontrovertible evidences of US interference in Iran after the revolution which reinforced the views of Iranian revolutionaries that the US had every intention of either taking control of the revolution itself or unmaking or overturning the Islamic Revolution. With the help of some English-speaking Iranians sympathetic to the revolutionary cause the hostage-takers managed to painstakingly piece together many of the shredded documents and published a series of books entitled *The Documents of the Nest of Spies: Volumes I to VI*.<sup>59</sup> The revelation of US secret involvement in Iran after the revolution significantly increased Iranian paranoia about US intervention in Iran in future.

Against this backdrop Khomeini stated: “Today there are underground treacheries in these embassies ... and the most important and main one is the one belonging to the Great Satan which is America.”<sup>60</sup> Thus gradually and firmly the “Great Satan” label was publicly fixed on the US during the Hostage Crisis of 1979-1981 and it became very easy to whip up potent anti-American feeling and convert it into support for the Islamic government. With the latest spate of anti-Americanism Khomeini now successfully convinced the Iranians to have a referendum on Islamic rule through an Islamic Constitution that was passed by a nearly unanimous vote on December 3, 1979. Khomeini then associated the US with the opponents of his famous *velayat-e faqih* or Guardian of Jurisconsult. It was in this way, the Hostage Crisis came to Khomeini’s life

as a watershed. He vigorously consolidated the Islamic Revolution on strong anti-Americanism after the 1979, and thus 'the second revolution' gained full pace. As it turned out later, Khomeini's policy toward the hostage issue divorced the Iran-US relations forever. In the background of continued tension between Iran and the US over the Hostage Crisis, on March 21, 1980, on the occasion of the Iranian New Year (Nowrouz), Khomeini delivered a message in which he referred to the US as "the global plunderer". Khomeini stated: "We are at war with international communism no less than we are struggling against the global plunderers of the West, headed by America, Zionism, and Israel." Warning his countrymen Khomeini said "the danger that America poses is so great that if you commit the smallest oversight, you will be destroyed."<sup>61</sup> On April 26, 1980, a day after the US failed rescue mission (see below) Khomeini called on the Iranian youths to cement his Islamic Revolution and said: "For today it is the superpower America that we are confronting, and at a time when we need our youth to participate in this confrontation, we see them confronting each other instead and thus serving America."<sup>62</sup>

Khomeini and his followers were able to use this paranoia and the Hostage Crisis successfully to create a state of emergency where the Islamic Republic of Iran maintained that the country faced determined US animosity. This also enabled them to weed out almost all the pro-American elements in the country. In the midst of such anti-American feeling, on June 2-6, 1980, the Iranian government held an 'International Conference on US Intervention' in Tehran 'to discuss America's alleged crimes' committed in Iran. The conference became an important means for the Iranians to let the world know the US misdeeds done during the Shah's time. The conference was attended by 300 delegates of liberation movements from 57 countries and organizations. The US also sent a 10-member US delegation led by Ramsay Clark (whom Carter had sent to Tehran on November 6, 1979, immediately after the hostage-taking for negotiation over the hostages but Khomeini refused to meet him) a former Attorney General who addressed the conference and appealed for the release of the hostages "although he thought" as stated by Sepehr Zabih, "God knows the Iranians were justified in seeking vengeance against the Shah's American backers."<sup>63</sup> Among the documents released at the conference was Brzezinski's secret memorandum to Secretary of State Vance which recommended 'destabilization' of Khomeini's regime through Iran's neighbours. The revelation of the documents in the conference also clearly proves that the immediate objective of the Carter administration after the Islamic Revolution was to impose a moderate government on Iran. To the US, the conference was humiliating show; therefore, it continued to threaten Iran for not freeing its citizens. Following repeated US threats over the hostages and after the US broke diplomatic relations with Iran on April 7, now Iran officially severed diplomatic relationship with the US on July 15, 1980.<sup>64</sup>



#### **IV. The End of the Hostage Crisis**

On September 11, 1980, Khomeini formulated the following sentiments into specific demands which included: (a) return of the Shah's assets to Iran; (b) cancellation of US financial claims against Iran; (c) unfreezing of Iranian assets; and (d) a US promise of non-intervention in Iranian affairs. It is said that Roland Reagan—the Republican candidate for US President before the November election—indicated that he would accept three of these conditions, and leave the question of the Shah's assets for the US courts to decide.<sup>65</sup> In the meantime, the death of the Shah on July 27, 1980, gave an impetus to the end of the Hostage Crisis. The Iraqi invasion of Iran on September 22, 1980 also pushed Tehran's Islamic regime to resolve the hostage issue as quickly as possible relinquishing even some of its original demands including a US apology for past misdeeds committed during the Shah's time by supporting him and the return of the Shah's assets. For his part, President Carter promised to release the \$300 million worth of US weapons that had been paid by the Shah government of Iran but had been withheld.<sup>66</sup> After the failure of the 'French connection' of March 1980, and 'German connection'<sup>67</sup> of September 1980 in a bid to resolve the Hostage Crisis, Algeria—which had enhanced its credibility in brokering the 1975 agreement between Iran and Iraq—was accepted by both Iran and the US to mediate for serious negotiation. The Algerian mediated-negotiations soon produced some hopes but Iranian representative in the negotiations used delaying tactics to make sure that no agreement was reached before November 6, 1980.<sup>68</sup> Khomeini firmly believed that he would be able to hold the result of the US Presidential Election in his hands and following the US failed military mission he indicated this in this way: "He should give up the hope of becoming president."<sup>69</sup> To some, Khomeini agreed to the hostages' release only after the Shah had died and Carter had lost the 1980 Presidential Election, thereby paying for his "crime" of supporting the Shah.<sup>70</sup> In fact, Khomeini's decision was 'indispensable to the outcome—the humiliation and eventual electoral defeat of an American President—in that he clearly managed to impose his preferences over those of the United States'.<sup>71</sup> Khomeini thus showed that Iran also could determine political outcomes in the US, just as the latter had done on the former in 1953. In this way, the Ayatullah and his fellow Iranians were able to take a sweet revenge on the US for its past role in Iran.

After Carter's defeat in the Presidential election, the renewed negotiations through Algerian intermediaries both Iran and the US agreed upon the "Declaration of the Government of the Democratic and Popular Republic of Algeria"<sup>72</sup> (signed by Iranian representative Behzad Nabavi and US representative Warren Christopher) on January 19, 1981. In accordance with the deal, the US acceded to two demands the Iranian revolutionary government had made before the Embassy's occupation: it promised to help Iran nationalize the assets of the family of former Shah, and it pledged not to "intervene directly or indirectly, politically or militarily, in Iran's internal affairs."<sup>73</sup> The US also promised not to bring claims against Iran on behalf of the

hostages and finally agreed to unfreeze the Iranian assets in the US totaled \$12 billion (see also economic chapter) and soon it began transferring them to Iran. While Iran sent fifty-two American hostages to Mehrabad airport. According to John D. Stempel, as a last slap at President Carter, the takeoff was delayed until a half hour after President Reagan finished his inaugural address.<sup>74</sup> With this final US humiliation the prolonged Hostage Crisis came to an end.

**(c) How Much the Hostage Crisis Affected the Iran-US Relations**

Historically, the Hostage Crisis of 1979-1981 caused irreparable damage to the ongoing low-intensity hostile relationship between Tehran and Washington and it took an intense hostile turn. During the period of the Hostage Crisis a situation of extreme tension prevailed between Iran and the US while the painful experience of the 444-day captivity of US diplomats in Tehran shocked the American people and has had a lasting and profound impact on Iran-US diplomatic relations. Barbara Slavin has observed that for many Americans, the Hostage Crisis remains the defining event of Iran-US relations. Americans who were politically conscious at the time of the 1979 Islamic Revolution of Iran will never forget the seizure of the US Embassy on November 4, 1979, and the images of blindfolded US diplomats.<sup>75</sup> President Carter himself is of the opinion that “Sunday, November 4, 1979, is a date I will never forget because on the day real grief in our country”.<sup>76</sup>

In fact, the Hostage Crisis wrought irreparable damage to the already troubled and hostile Iran-US relations and shaped the Iran-US relations in a more hostile way. Before the Hostage Crisis the relations between the Islamic Republic of Iran and the US were of relatively low point<sup>77</sup> that can be characterized as low-intensity hostility. After the Hostage Crisis, Iran-US bilateral relations had sunk to an all-time low which prompted the US to break its diplomatic relations with Iran that occurred on April 7, 1980. Since the 1979 Hostage Crisis Iran and the US have been engaging in a tense and highly emotional conflict while the US after its rupture with Iran has been in no mood to mend diplomatic relationship with the Islamic Republic of Iran. Rather, after the Hostage Crisis the ‘diabolical enemy’ image was applied to the leaders of the Islamic Republic of Iran. Reportedly, in a press conference of February 1980 President Carter not only refused to discuss publicly on America’s past dealings with Iran in 1953 terming it “ancient history” but also asked the media to launch a concerted anti-Iranian propaganda crusade. He himself viewed Khomeini as “crazy,” “nutty,” or “insane,” and then applied a useful device for turning the media’s general animosity towards the Iranians (and Islam).<sup>78</sup> As a consequence, Iranians were regularly depicted in US media as “devilish savages” and “wild-eyed Iranians” who made the US “look like a clown,” while their leader Khomeini as a “79-year-old fanatic” who had “in a year’s time transformed the country into a tyrannical theocracy.”<sup>79</sup> The US policy

towards Iran and the Iran-US relations in the 1980s can be seen in the light of such US view of Iran and its leaders.

Anti-Iranian sentiment got ground in the US even after the release of the hostages. In a May 1981 *The New York Times* retrospective on the Iranian Hostage Crisis, A. M. Rosenthal ruminated about the effect captivity had had on the nation's psyche in this way: Americans mourned because "not just the 52 but all Americans and worse still, our very government, had been taken captive and held in that embassy." It goes without saying that Rosenthal's commentary on the role of hostages and captivity in shaping US foreign policy toward Iran is grounded firmly in US history.<sup>80</sup> In the view of some analysts, before he left office President Jimmy Carter allegedly advised the State Department to "focus all public attention on building up a wave of resentment against the Iranians" and to portray them (along with Islam) as terror.<sup>81</sup> One of the objectives behind Carter's such move was to create a situation to isolate Iran internationally. Dihana Ishtar, an Iranian woman who grew up in Iran during the Shah's regime and experienced the deep pain of the political and cultural repression, has written in 1980 that the US media exploited the Iranian situation and provoked hatred and racism in US against the Iranian people whom they labeled as crazy nuts angry for "no reasons" (!), while sorrows and the anguish of the Iranian people caused by US-supported Shah remained forgotten and went unmentioned in the US media following the hostage-taking. Americans frequently talked about terrorism in reference to the holding of 52 Americans in Tehran however, they and their media never mistakenly mentioned the times when US-created and supervised Shah's SAVAK established a reign of terror, imprisoned, tortured and terrorized the Iranian people during the Shah's 27-year rule. Ishtar has stated grudgingly that with repeated daily poundings through the US media which she has termed "mind-rape", the US President Carter impressed upon Iranians his justification (so neatly rationalized) for intended rape.<sup>82</sup>

### **Conclusion**

Since the Hostage Crisis in 1979, the US government and the Americans alike have been maintaining a visceral aversion to Iranian Islamic leadership. In the informed words of an analyst: "The hostage incident left a legacy of distrust, misunderstanding, and hatred that will plague Iranian-American relations for years."<sup>83</sup> Americans generally believe that upon the onset of the Hostage Crisis Iranians have insulted Carter, and through him their country. To them, the Hostage Crisis was a painful trauma inflicted on the US by a weaker Third World country—Iran. Therefore, in essence, from 1979 every US policy has been directing toward Iran mindful of the hostage issue.

## Notes and References of Section II of Chapter 4

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4. David Farber, *Taken Hostage: ... op., cit.*, p. 114.
5. James A. Bill, *The Eagle and the Lion: ...*, *op., cit.*, pp. 291-292; Robert Sherrill, 'Hostages', *op., cit.*, p. 140. The CIA officials who returned to Iran included station chief Thomas Ahern and his associate, his other two colleagues named Malcolm Karp and William Daugherty who were assisted by Iran specialist CIA agent George W. Cave and Robert Clayton Ames.
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13. A careful study will help ones to conclude that this time the US was working for a hidden agenda: a 1953-like changeover in Iran. Because, although the US successfully sponsored and managed in concluding Camp David Accords between Israel and Egypt (and Palestinians) and created a pro-US Arab-Israeli axis in the region, but it did not in any way compensate the US for the loss of Iran. See: Leon T. Hadar, *Quagmire: America in the Middle East, op., cit.*, p. 52; Rose McDermott, *Risk-Taking in International Politics: Prospect Theory in American Foreign Policy*, The University of Michigan Press, USA, 2004, p. 46.
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39. Op., cit., pp. 151-152; John D. Stempel, *Inside the Iranian Revolution*, op., cit., p. 231.
40. More than that since the beginning of the crisis bumper sticker demands in America to "nuke Iran" or "hang Khomeini". See: Richard Falk, 'The Iran Hostage Crisis: ...', op., cit., p. 411.
41. Robert Dreyfuss, *Hostage to Khomeini*, New Benjamin Franklin House Publishing Company, New York, 1981, p. 63; Maryam Panah, *The Islamic Republic and the World: ...*, op., cit., p. 66; David Farber, *Taken Hostage: ...*, op., cit., p. 162.
42. Lester H. Brune and Richard Dean Burns, *Chronological History of United States Foreign Relations*, Vol. II (1933-1988), op., cit., p. 885.
43. Cameron R. Hume, *The United Nations, Iran and Iraq: How Peacemaking Changed*, Indiana University Press, USA, 1994, P. 32.
44. John D. Stempel, *Inside the Iranian Revolution*, op., cit., p. 239.
45. At the same time, the Iranian Embassy in Massachusetts Avenue in Washington D.C, was closed and more than 50 Iranian diplomats and their families departed. Privately, however, US emissaries including intelligence agents were in contacts with the Iran's President Bani Sadr and Foreign Minister Sadeq Qutbzadeh. From April to November, Washington maintained contact with various representatives of Iran through intermediaries. John D. Stempel, *Inside the Iranian Revolution*, op., cit., p. 244.
46. Rose McDermott, *Risk-Taking in International Politics: ...*, op., cit., p. 53; Nikola B. Schahgaldian, op., cit., p. 129.
47. "Breaking of Ties between America and Iran", available at: [http://en.imam-khomeini.ir/en/n4664/Weekly\\_Topic/Breaking\\_of\\_Ties\\_Between\\_America\\_and\\_Iran](http://en.imam-khomeini.ir/en/n4664/Weekly_Topic/Breaking_of_Ties_Between_America_and_Iran) (Accessed on August 14, 2015).
48. 'U.S. Relations with Iran', Department of State's Fact Sheet, August 28, 2013, available at: <http://www.state.gov/r/pa/ei/bgn/5314.htm>; Karl De Rouen Jr. and Paul Bellamy (ed.), *International Security and the United States: An Encyclopedia*, Vol. 1, Praeger Security International, London, 2008, p. 358.
49. David Farber, *Taken Hostage: ...* op., cit., p. 172.
50. For detail about the "Operation Eagle Claw" see: David Patrick Houghton, *US Foreign Policy and the Iran Hostage Crisis*, Cambridge University Press, UK, 2004, pp. 124-125; Rose McDermott, *Risk-Taking in International Politics: ...*, op., cit., pp. 71-72.
51. James A. Bill, *The Eagle and the Lion: ...*, op., cit., p. 301.
52. For Full statement of Jimmy Carter see: "Statement on the Iran Rescue Mission (April 25, 1980)", <http://millercenter.org/president/carter/speeches/speech-3936>
53. *Islamic Republic of Iran Today, 1987*, Published by Islamic Propagation Organization, Tehran, 1st Edition, 1987, p. 85. After the failed rescue mission hostages were moved to Iran's Revolutionary Guards bases around the country to preempt another rescue effort. According to Barbara Slavina, in a reward for Guards' services, the US Embassy compound was granted to them who turned the compound into a high school for Guards Air Force cadets which was plastered with anti-American

- slogans, such as “Down to World Arrogance!” To some, the former US Embassy, later called “the nest of spies” or the Spy Den finally has been turned into a cultural center. Mir M. Hosseini, ‘American Hostages Released’, [http://fouman.com/Y/Get\\_Iranian\\_History\\_Today.php?artid=247](http://fouman.com/Y/Get_Iranian_History_Today.php?artid=247)
54. David Patrick Houghton, *US Foreign Policy and the Iran Hostage Crisis*, *op. cit.*, pp. 137-139.
  55. Maryam Panah, *The Islamic Republic and the World: ...*, *op. cit.*, p. 66.
  56. Gary Sick, *All Fall Down: ...*, *op. cit.*, p. 360.
  57. Farhang Jahanpour, ‘The Roots of the Hostage Crisis’, *op. cit.*, p. 34; Dilip Hiro, *Iran under the Ayatollahs*, *op. cit.*, p. 320.
  58. “The failure of the US Army in Tabas”, ‘Imam Khomeini Official Website’, [http://en.imam-khomeini.ir/en/n7819/News/The\\_failure\\_of\\_the\\_US\\_Army\\_in\\_Tabas](http://en.imam-khomeini.ir/en/n7819/News/The_failure_of_the_US_Army_in_Tabas)
  59. For detail see: A.H.H. Abidi, ‘The Tehran Documents’, *India International Centre Quarterly*, Vol. 12, No. 3, September, 1985, pp. 273-285; David Patrick Houghton, *US Foreign Policy and the Iran Hostage Crisis*, *op. cit.*, p. 62.
  60. Khomeini, *Sahifeh-e Nur*, Vol. 10, November 1979, p. 41, quoted in Maryam Panah, *The Islamic Republic and the World: ...*, *op. cit.*, p. 66; Imam Khomeini, *Islam and Revolution*, *op. cit.*, pp. 279-281; Massoumeh Ebtekar, as told to Fred A. Reed, *Takeover in Tehran: The Inside Story of the 1979 U.S. Embassy Capture*, Vancouver: Talonbooks, 2000, pp. 51-52.
  61. Imam Khomeini, *Islam and Revolution*, *op. cit.*, p. 286.
  62. *Op. cit.*, p. 297.
  63. Sepehr Zabih, *Iran since the Revolution*, *op. cit.* p. 55.
  64. Masih Muhajeri, *Islamic Revolution: ...*, *op. cit.*, p. 129; Dilip Hiro, *Iran under the Ayatollahs*, *op. cit.*, pp. 218, 320, 359.
  65. Dilip Hiro, *Iran under the Ayatollahs*, *op. cit.*, p. 321.
  66. *New York Times*, October, 29, 1980. (confirm with page number from Dhaka University Library)
  67. For detail see: David Patrick Houghton, *US Foreign Policy and the Iran Hostage Crisis*, *op. cit.*, pp. 108, 140.
  68. As to the delayed handover of the hostages, Gary Sick, a Carter administration official, later stated that Reagan’s election campaign director, William Joseph Casey, who later served as Reagan’s Director of the CIA, had secretly negotiated a deal in Paris in October 1980 with revolutionary Iran so that Tehran delayed the release of the hostages until after the election in exchange for favourable treatment by Reagan when he became President. Later the issue became known as the “October Surprise”. However, Reagan denied the charge both as President and after leaving office.
  69. “The failure of the US Army in Tabas”, ‘Imam Khomeini Official Website’, *op. cit.*
  70. Dilip Hiro, *Iran under the Ayatollahs*, *op. cit.*, p. 170; Hooshang Amirahmadi (ed.), *op. cit.*, p. 157; Barbara Slavin, *Bitter Friends, Bosom Enemies: ...*, *op. cit.*, p. 17.
  71. David Patrick Houghton, *US Foreign Policy and the Iran Hostage Crisis*, *op. cit.*, p. 73.
  72. For detail about the Accords of January 19, 1981, see: [algiers\\_accords.pdf](#)
  73. Shlomo Cohen, Karen Goodyear Krueger, Marian E. Lindberg, Michael E. Martin, Jocelyn F. Samuels, *op. cit.*, pp. 823-824.
  74. John D. Stempel, *Inside the Iranian Revolution*, *op. cit.*, p. 260; David Patrick Houghton, *US Foreign Policy and the Iran Hostage Crisis*, *op. cit.*, p. 143.
  75. Barbara Slavin, *Bitter Friends, Bosom Enemies: ...*, *op. cit.*, pp. 16-17.
  76. Jimmy Carter, *Keeping Faith: ...*, *op. cit.* p. 466.
  77. Pamela Johnston Conover, Karen A. Mingst, Lee Sigelman, ‘Mirror Images in Americans’ Perceptions of Nations and Leaders during the Iranian Hostage Crisis’, *Journal of Peace Research*, Vol. 17, No. 4, 1980, p. 328.
  78. Edward W. Said, *Covering Islam: ...*, *op. cit.*, p. 118; David Farber, *Taken Hostage: ... op. cit.*, pp. 154-158.
  79. Catherine V. Scott, *op. cit.*, p. 182.
  80. *Op. cit.*, p. 177.
  81. Edward W. Said, *Covering Islam: ...*, *op. cit.*, p. lxi; Kuross A. Samii, *Involvement by Invitation: ...*, *op. cit.*, p.x.
  82. Dihana Ishtar, ‘the rape of Iran’, *op. cit.*, p. 31.
  83. James A. Bill, *The Eagle and the Lion: ...*, *op. cit.*, p. 302.

## **Section III**

### **Iran-US Relations during and after the Iran-Iraq War: 1980-1989**

#### **Introduction**

Apart from the Hostage Crisis of 1979-1981 another important event worthy of detailed analysis to understand properly the dynamics of Iran-US relations of the 1980s is the Iran-Iraq War of 1980-1988.<sup>1</sup> The Iran-Iraq War is still regarded as one of the determining factors in the Iran-US relations. Generally it is related in history that Iraqi President Saddam Hussein (1979-2003) opportunistically invaded Iran's Khuzestan province, hoping to take advantage of the Iran's political disarray. His invasion of Iran ultimately resulted in the eight year long bloody confrontation, however, Iranians blamed the US for it.<sup>2</sup> By now it has become an established fact that as part of a wider US agenda the Reagan administration had backed Iraqi President Saddam Hussein in one of the longest, bloodiest, and costliest conventional and brutal wars of the twentieth century he fought against Iran when he used chemical weapons against Iranian troops and thus Iran was contained. There is also considerable, concrete, convincing and credible evidence to suggest that the US during the Carter administration had encouraged Iraq's President Saddam Hussein to wage war against Iran. What is more, once the war started, the US masterfully determined the courses of the war and finally put an end to the war when it saw necessary. Given these facts, this section of chapter 4 presents a vivid picture of the nitty-gritty of Iran-US relations during the Iran-Iraq War. For that the section first demonstrates in brief how the US machinations contributed to the beginning of the war. Then a thorough investigation has been made about the US policy in the war for which Iranians are still anti-American. The section also sheds light on Iranian responses to US policy as well as the overall Iran-US interactions during the war. Finally, the section critically looks at the Iran-US relations from the end of the Iran-Iraq War in August 1988 to the passing of Iran's charismatic Supreme Leader Ayatullah Imam Khomeini on June 3, 1989. The section develops under two main headings.

#### **A. Iran-US Relations during the Iran-Iraq War: 1980-1988**

#### **B. Iran-US Relations after the Iran-Iraq War: Up to June 3, 1989**

#### **A. Iran-US Relations during the Iran-Iraq War: 1980-1988**

For our convenience Iran-US relations during the Iran-Iraq War are examined under three sub-headings:

- I. How the Iran-Iraq War Began: A Brief Review of US Machinations**
- II. The US Policy in the War and Iran-US Relations**
- III. The Legacy of the Iran-Iraq War**

### **I. How the Iran-Iraq War Began: A Brief Review of US Machinations**

Historians do agree in one important point that the Iranian Islamic Revolution of 1979 created a unique opportunity for Iraq to start a military engagement with Iran to reestablish Iraq's ascendancy in the Persian Gulf. The internal disturbances caused by different armed groups as stated in the previous section, plus the Kurdish and Azeris revolts in northwest Iran, and Arab revolt in Khuzestan and the Baluch revolt in the south of Iran which were prevalent in post-revolutionary Iran throughout 1979 and 1980 made the situation favourable for Iraq. It was during this critical period of time Iran lacked regional friends due to the Islamic Republic of Iran's revolutionary rhetoric, especially, Khomeini's call for export of revolution to neighbouring countries. Internationally, Tehran-Moscow relations were at odds due to Iran's condemnation of the Soviet invasion and occupation of Afghanistan in 1979, scraping of the 1921 Russo-Persian treaty (which had provision of articles 5 and 6 under which the Soviet Union had preserved the right of counter intervention in Iran in case of any pre-emptive foreign aggression in the country), as well as Khomeini's strong anti-Soviet stance for atheist system of communism. While Tehran-Washington relations hit all time low over the 1979 Hostage Crisis issue which led the US to cut its political and diplomatic relations with Iran on April 7, 1980. Given the situation, Saddam Hussein resolved to deal Iran a knock-out blow in the throes of the revolution.

However, from every perspective, the Iran-Iraq War was thoroughly a modern conflict between two modern Muslim states for thoroughly modern reasons of national interest and regional hegemony in which ancient animosities, traditional Arab-Persian ethnic and cultural (Semitic Arabs and Aryan Persians), ideological (Iran's Islamic and Iraq's secular) differences, the religious disengagements between Sunni and Shi'i regimes, personal rivalries<sup>3</sup> and competition for prestige between Khomeini and Iraqi President Saddam Hussein,<sup>4</sup> border disputes including the dispute over the 127-mile-long Shatt al-Arab waterway<sup>5</sup>, and finally external influencers, particularly the US and its Gulf allies (particularly, Saudi Arabia) played their due parts.<sup>6</sup> It is observed that despite the fact that there were lots of causes of the war: historical, political, economic, religious and cultural (as just mentioned and which are not elaborated here for technical reasons) and these all had indeed existed between the two states for a long time, specifically for half a century since the independence of Iraq in 1932, but there was nothing to resort to war. Another related but more significant fact is that when started, the devastating war lasted for long eight years as nightmares for both the Iraqis and the Iranians. Gholam Hossein Razi (1928-2013), former Professor Emeritus of the Department of Political Science at the University of Houston, noted in an article (published in December, 1988) that it was anticipated that it would take Iran and Iraq until the year 2008 to return to where they were in 1980, if every



man, woman, and child saves \$50,000 per annum to be devoted solely to rectifying the damage of the war.<sup>7</sup>

Curiously, when the conflict finally ended in 1988, at the expense of incalculable human loss and material (and environmental) damage<sup>8</sup> with both Saddam Hussein and Ayatullah Khomeini were in power in Iraq and Iran respectively. What is more, taking the advantage of Iran-Iraq military engagement Israel, an important and trusted US ally in the region, completely destroyed Iraq's nuclear power plant at Osirak on June 7, 1981 by a secretly-conducted surprise aerial attack in the name of Operation Opera. These all give rise to a number of relevant questions including, why was this bloody and costly armed conflict? Who did give a push for the start of the war? Who was the winner of the conflict given the fact that the "Iran-Iraq War truly a war without winners"? What did cause the prolongation of the war? As we go to explore these questions, of course, in the context of Iran-US relations, we encounter other vital questions: did the US play any role to encourage Iraq's Saddam Hussein to go to war with Iran? If it is so, then why, how and to what extent did the US promote Iraqi leader to go to war with Iran? What was US policy in the Iran-Iraq War? How far was the US responsible for determining or controlling the courses of the war, and terminating the war at will? How did the war affect Iran-US relations? Or, what is the legacy of the war on Iran-US relations? Is revolutionary Iran's claim of US-imposed war on the Iranians justified? It is pertinent to state that about a week later following the Iraqi invasion Khomeini urged his compatriots to "cut off the hands of America, which has emerged from Saddam's sleeve." While Majlis Speaker Hashemi Rafsanjani stated: "We see this war as an American war."<sup>9</sup> However, answers to all these questions are to be found out from complex political, economic, domestic, regional and international perspectives and within the periphery of Iran-US relations during the war period.

Needless to say, understanding of the present-day complex and hostile Iran-US relations will be easy only after uncovering the facts lie in the above-mentioned questions. However, contrary to the established fact, a group of pro-American historians and scholars including Barry Rubin, Brian Urquhart, Gary Sick, Kenneth M. Pollack have tried to establish a kind of distorted fact that due to the Soviet invasion and occupation of Afghanistan in 1979 and because of the lack of diplomatic relations of Washington with either Tehran or Baghdad, the US had nothing to do either with the Iraqi decision to go to war with Iran or with the Iran-Iraq War. They have also claimed that the US did neither influence nor determine the events of Iran-Iraq War. They have gone on to state in a convincing fashion that the Carter administration publicly adopted a neutral and noninterventionist stance dictated by a lack of influence in either belligerent capital; by the need to reach an accommodation on the hostages; by the fact that fundamental Western interests would be threatened by the political and military collapse of either state; and by the danger that direct intervention by US would only provide a pretext for the Soviet involvement in Iran.<sup>10</sup>

Again, in line with a statement made by Phebe Marr that the decision to invade Iran was Saddam's,<sup>11</sup> Kenneth M. Pollack has tried to refute Iran's claim that the Iran-Iraq War was a US-imposed war in which Washington first encouraged Iraq to invade Iran and then assisted in the war. He has contended that the US was dragged into the war. In an effort to convince his readers and to support his assertion, he finally adopted a geometrical ploy to show that such US involvement in encouraging and supporting Iraq in the war was "180 degrees from reality."<sup>12</sup> But consciously or unconsciously Pollack himself has made conflicting and ambiguous statements. Elsewhere, in his book entitled *The Persian Puzzle: The Conflict between Iran and America*, Pollack has mentioned that when the war began most American remained angry and frustrated at Tehran. Given, when Iran turned the tide of the war Washington provided Iraq with intelligence, military hard-ware, agricultural credits support by delisting Iraq from the countries that sponsor international terrorism. At one point the US tried to limit the support it provided Iraq.<sup>13</sup> He has gone to state that "As part of the "tilt", the United States turned a blind eye to Iraq's various misdeeds" including the use of CW against Iranian troops, and Iraq's Kurds.<sup>14</sup> The US under the Reagan administration gradually increased its "involvement in the war to the point where, in the end, Washington's role became an important factor in Iran's defeat."<sup>15</sup> Pollack's own statements clearly show that the US adopted a calculated policy before and during the Iran-Iraq War to contain revolutionary Iran. Therefore, there is no reason to believe arguments of the above-stated scholars that the US had nothing to do with the beginning, determining and terminating the war, although apparently, these are convincing arguments put forward by these veteran scholars to baffle the common readers and, to some extent, the scholar alike regarding the US policy towards the Iran-Iraq War. Fundamentally, their arguments are entirely unjustified, misinterpretations and misrepresentations of the fact. As a matter of fact, from an impartial point of view and through an in-depth analysis, it will be crystal clear the US had everything to do with the beginning of the war, controlling or determining the courses of the war and finally ending the war which profoundly impacted Iran-US relations.

Let us now see how the US encouraged Iraq to wage war against Iran and for which Iran-US relations are still hostile. Reportedly, on November 10, 1980, about thirty eight days after the start of the war *The New York Magazine* reported that before the Iraqi invasion of Iran, the US had full knowledge that the war was imminent.<sup>16</sup> Evidences are also available that before the inception of the war in July 1980 the National Security Advisor of the Carter administration Zbigniew Brzezinski and Iraq's Saddam Hussein met secretly in Amman. Iran's former President Abu al-Hasan Bani Sadr (1980-1981) claimed in his book entitled *My Turn to Speak: Iran, the Revolution and Secret Deals with the U.S.*, (1991) Iraq's Saddam Hussein got the "green light" to attack Iran from the US National Security Advisor Zbigniew Brzezinski when the two met in

Jordan in July 1980.<sup>17</sup> In the same month, on July 17, 1980 the *New York Times* published a provocative advertisement implicating Saddam Hussein that asked whether Iraq would “repeat her former glories and the name of Saddam Hussein link up with that of Hammurabi, Ashurbanipal, al-Mansur, and Harun al-Rashid?”<sup>18</sup> Without doubt, the glory-seeking Saddam Hussein and an aspirant for the Arab leadership after Nasser’s death, who loved to identify himself with Nebuchadnezzar, the king of Babylonia who conquered Jerusalem (586 BC), and Saladin, who regained Jerusalem in 1187 by defeating the Crusaders, was certainly influenced by these US encouragement and propaganda.

There was a sound basis of the US encouragement propaganda. Following the collapse of US “twin pillar” strategy upon the success of the Islamic Revolution led by Khomeini in 1979 a new dimension was added to the US view of Iraq. Under the new circumstances, Iraq was being seen as a potential ally in maintaining regional stability.<sup>19</sup> In this context, following the hostage taking when Iran was still in the throes of Islamic Revolution, Washington’s faith in Saddam Hussein as a pillar of stability became a central fact of US policy. This faith led US to encourage Saddam Hussein in his belligerency and aggression against Iran.<sup>20</sup> It is also reported that Saddam Hussein consulted the US Gulf allies, specifically Saudi Arabia before went to war with Iran.<sup>21</sup> An investigative journalist by the name of Robert Parry wrote that the then US Secretary of State General Alexander Haig in a 1981 memo noted that “it was also interesting to confirm that President Carter gave the Iraqi a green light to launch war against Iran through [then Prince, later King of Saudi Arabia] Fahd”.<sup>22</sup> This was a very significant gesture, especially in view of the closeness of Saudi-US relations and anti-Iranian view of the Saudi leadership (see below). Therefore, there is plenty of evidence to suggest that the Carter administration gave Saddam Hussein the green light to invade Iran and assisted him after the invasion.<sup>23</sup> As we go through the historical facts, we find a number of major reasons that demonstrate how and why the US encouraged Iraq to go to war with Iran. These are explained very briefly in the following but let me be very specific about the reasons behind the war related to the US policy for which Iran viewed the war as counter-revolutionary and as an “imposed war” which was imposed by the global oppressors,<sup>24</sup> and for which an irreparable damage was done to the Iran-US relations which is yet to mend.

**Firstly**, as the shockwave of Islamic Revolution forced the US-backed Shah to leave Iran, the US never wanted to see a strong Iran under Khomeini, who since 1979 frequently and disparagingly called the US—the “Great Satan”, its strong ally Israel—the “Little Satan” and the White House—the “Black House.”<sup>25</sup> Khomeini also derogatorily portrayed President Carter as the personification of the “Great Satan.”<sup>26</sup> Khomeini’s Iran added another affliction to the US by holding 52 Americans as hostage on November 4, 1979. Factually, the taking of hostages placed Iran and the US squarely in confrontation. The hostage-taking inflicted a huge affliction and

humiliation on US image in the eyes of the international community and thus it created an American image of Iran as a fanatic nation committed to undermining fundamental US interests. For that reason, ever since this incident, Americans have come to hate Iran even more than they loath Russia.<sup>27</sup> What is more important, since the inception of the Hostage Crisis on November 4, 1979, the US began to view Islamic Iran as a terrorist state and its Supreme Leader Ayatullah Khomeini as a “cancer” which to be removed before spread.<sup>28</sup>

There is no dispute that the Islamic Revolution led by Khomeini and the subsequent hostage episode which were seen as serious defeats for US foreign policy in the region which humbled the US as well as its President Jimmy Carter in the eyes of the world in an unpredictable but humiliating fashion. In this context, the US government viewed the Khomeini’s revolutionary regime as contrary to US interests and a formidable threat to the stability of the whole region. Thus the visceral nature of US antipathy toward the Islamic Republic grew. The Carter administration viewed Iran’s religious leaders as the clear danger to world peace and world economy and therefore, normal dealings with Khomeini were no longer possible unless and until a changeover took place in Tehran. The US government and the Americans began to term (and they still do so) revolutionary Iran their enemy number one in the region. Under this circumstance, drastic steps were justified to hasten Khomeini’s departure from power with the concrete view that the Ayatullah “must go”.<sup>29</sup> At one stage, the National Security Council (NSC), the Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) and the Pentagon placed top priority on the removal of Khomeini through military intervention. Like the US policy in Syria since 2011 (where the Syrian rebels who have been fighting against the Bashar al-Assad government were armed by US and its allies Qatar and Saudi Arabia), they even favoured the secret plan to arm the US agents and Iranian Arabs of Khuzestan and anti-Khomeinists who strongly opposed the new Islamic regime in Iran. Amidst these US thinking and actions, as the painful Hostage Crisis continued, on January 9, 1980, the Director of the CIA Stanfield Turner posited three potential ways to positively affect the outcome of the Hostage Crisis. First, the US might invade Iran; second, the US might use the already explosive situation of the ethnic dissidence of Iran to solve the hostage issue; and third, the US might adopt a waiting game since Iran’s arch enemy Iraq was likely to invade Iran’s oil-rich province Khuzestan by taking advantage of the internal chaos in Iran; however, only timing seemed to be in doubt. In that case, the US could exploit all these possibilities through “actions and propaganda”.<sup>30</sup>

The Carter administration even seriously and desperately considered an invasion of Iran to seize its oil fields in the fall of 1980 to bolster his prospects for re-election. However, it was the concern for the American hostages that compelled President Carter to drop the plan, and opted for the waiting game.<sup>31</sup> As the US policy of waiting game continued, credible reports from Western observers in Iraq indicated that the Iraqis were planning an invasion of Iran’s oil fields

taking the advantage of Iran's political turmoil and Tehran's hostile relations with the US. The US carefully noticed that war of words was exchanging between the leaders of Iraq and Iran while border disputes between Iran and Iraq took a new proportion. The US government which was losing its patience since months of negotiations over hostage issue went on with no final decision reached; saw an opportunity in deteriorating Iran-Iraq relations since the Carter administration concluded that post-revolutionary chaotic situation would make Iran an easy prey for mighty Iraq.

Certainly, the US saw that any Iraqi military invasion would benefit the interests of the US in two distinct ways. First, Iraq would block the spread of political or radical Islam to the rest of the Middle East and second, the war would increase pressure upon Iran to resolve the seemingly never-ending Hostage Crisis. Mindful of this the US encouraged Iraq in its war with Iran in the hope that the war would not only lead to the resolution of the hostage crisis and get released American citizens, but also lead to the overthrow of the Iranian Islamic government and the restoration of the old order with or without the deposed Shah. Francis A. Boyle has argued that there were several indications from the public record that the Carter Administration tacitly condoned, if not actively encouraged, the Iraqi invasion of Iran in September of 1980 because of the administration's shortsighted belief that the pressures of belligerency might expedite release of the US diplomatic hostages held by Tehran since November of 1979. Boyle concluded that because of the Hostage Crisis, the US finally moved to punish, isolate, and weaken the Khomeini regime.<sup>32</sup> The Iran-Iraq War was thus devised and it was devised the war as a 'tit-for-tat' military engagement against Iran wherein Iraq initially got involved with US encouragement for the crime Iran had committed by holding Americans as hostages for 444 days. As the US had to endure an unprecedented period of pain and degradation, despite its status as a superpower, it soon opted for a sweet revenge on Iran for this pain through planning a long-term plot—the Iran-Iraq War.

**Secondly**, the American game plan was to lure Iraq's Saddam Hussein into a war with Iran he could not just resist and also in order to provide a pretext for the US to consolidate its position in the Persian Gulf (which was since 1977 one of Carter administration's principal goals as examined in section IV of the previous chapter) as opposed to the Soviet presence in Afghanistan if needed by a military intervention in the Gulf region in the wake of the Soviet invasion and occupation of Afghanistan on December 27, 1979 and thus prevented the Soviet access to warm water ports in the Indian Ocean. In response to the Soviet actions in Afghanistan and in a bid to defend the Persian Gulf against Soviet encroachment, the Carter Doctrine was declared.<sup>33</sup> When the US backed up its threat by moving a carrier task force into the Indian Ocean, the Soviet Union proclaimed its unwillingness to tolerate a US military presence in the Persian Gulf. Thus the Persian Gulf had become an arena of superpower conflict in the Cold War era. When the

Soviet Union invaded Afghanistan posing a new threat to the oil-rich Persian Gulf region, the US announced that it was creating a Rapid Deployment Force (RDF) for the Gulf region, which became operational on March 1, 1980. In the meantime, in November, 1980 only a month and a half after the war began the *New York Magazine* reported that President Carter warned that the US would use force if necessary to protect its interests in the Persian Gulf,<sup>34</sup> and for fighting back the “evil empire” (i.e., the Soviet Union). In this context, the US saw an unprecedented opportunity to achieve the just-mentioned goal during a future military conflict between two Muslim regional powers in the Persian Gulf. Hence, it went to encourage Iraq for a war speculating that the war might provide an excuse for the US to move into the Gulf militarily.

**Thirdly**, Washington had a justified fear of Iran’s military capability which was in actuality, enviable compared to the other Muslim states of the region since it was based on the most advanced American weaponry of the time bestowed upon it by the US-backed Shah. Being alarmed at the post-revolutionary anti-American and anti-Israeli government in Tehran, Washington urgently felt the necessity to destroy the military capability of the Islamic Republic of Iran. However, the US intention in this regard, was not by direct military engagement with Iran but through temptation of Iraq to engage military conflict with Iran. Steve A. Yetiv has put: “In the absence of war, Iran could have attempted non-military and less provocative fashion behind the tacit threat of its feared military hand. The war, however, forced Iran to play this hand, to deplete its military arsenal, and, in the process, to isolate itself further from the Arab Gulf states and the international community.”<sup>35</sup>

**Fourthly**, one of the objectives of this US temptation of Iraq to go to war with Iran was to free Israel from the wrath of the Islamic Republic of Iran after the revolution. As explained in chapter 3 that under the Shah, Tehran-Washington had enjoyed special relations also because of Iran-Israeli close and friendly relations. Following Shah’s policy change towards Israel since 1973 he was seen an unreliable US partner in the Persian Gulf region and finally was abandoned in 1979 as demonstrated in previous chapter. Since 1979 when the Islamic Republic of Iran not only denounced Israel as illegitimate state but also labeled it as the “Little Satan” who was acting as the agent of the “Great Satan”—the US in the region, it only incurred US-Israeli anger. Much concern to US, Khomeini positioned Israel as an enemy of Islam, a “cancer” that would destroy Islam and Muslims if not removed from the region and it was a state that did not want the Qur’an to exist. Therefore, he urged that “Every Muslim has a duty to prepare himself for battle against Israel”.<sup>36</sup> He named the last Friday of the Muslim fasting month of Ramadan as Quds<sup>37</sup> or Jerusalem Day and urged Muslims worldwide to demonstrate on that day against Israel and in support of the Palestinians. Khomeini even denounced Sadat’s newly established ties with Israel and accused Cairo of betraying the Palestinians.<sup>38</sup> Earlier, when PLO leader Yasser Arafat visited

Tehran after the Revolution on February 18, 1979, for talks with Khomeini he was accorded treatment befitting a head of state or government. In a bold gesture on the day of Arafat's arrival, Khomeini announced the expulsion of all Israelis from Iran and the recall of all Iranian diplomats from Israel. Finally, on the very day (that is on February 18, 1979) Khomeini's Iran severed diplomatic relations with Israel, including oil sales and air links.<sup>39</sup> On February 19, 1979, the erstwhile Israeli Embassy in Tehran had been handed over to the PLO for its use. Thus, the revolutionary government of Iran showed every effort to be committed to the Palestinian cause.

It was against this background and following the collapse of the US-backed Shah's regime interests of Israel and that of US have become intermingled and identical,<sup>40</sup> and thus Washington strongly advocated the idea of "one-pillar strategy" where Israel would become America's new policeman for stability in the Middle East. The US-Israeli allies now began to use the Islamic Revolutionary government of Iran as an example of Arab instability and adopted anti-Iran policy to contain revolutionary fervor. True, following the demise of Egypt's military power at the hands of Israel in 1967, Iraq emerged as the leading Arab military power with strong anti-Israeli sentiment.<sup>41</sup> It is pertinent to state that Soviet Union helped building Iraq's military strength as opposed to the US unchecked military support to Iran under the Shah. After the 1979 Iranian Islamic Revolution both country appeared threats to Israel. Essentially, Iraq was anti-Israel and Baghdad's nuclear programme (started since 1976) was aimed at balancing the region with Israel, however, the revolutionary Iran appeared more dangerous to both Israel and the US. In this context, the US successfully toyed with an idea of destroying both Muslim military powers through a war. The new spate of hostility between Iran and Iraq following the Islamic Revolution helped the US policymakers to execute the idea a great deal in this regard in a bid to relieve Israel of the wrath of these two Muslim states.

**Fifthly**, there is no mistaking that the US weapons became the instruments of wars in the Middle East long before the Iran-Iraq War. The thinking of arms sales to the Gulf states in general, and to the belligerents in particular, was one of US policy objectives behind its encouragement of Iraq to wage a war with Iran. History documents that although the US and the Soviet Union made every effort to continue to supply weapons to both of the belligerents: Iran and Iraq, they did little to promote an end to the conflict.<sup>42</sup> This does demonstrate Adam Tarock's conclusion that the superpowers had everything to do with the Iran-Iraq War.

**Sixthly**, the US encouraged and later supported Iraq in its war with Iran also for economic (oil) reason which was perhaps the most compelling reason. From the time the US-backed Shah fell in 1979, the principal regional interests of the US were: to ensure the flow of oil at reasonable prices; to maintain stability of its Arab and non-Arab (Israel) allies; and to deter and contain anti-US states including the Soviet Union and Iran. Following the 1979 Islamic Revolution in Iran,

intense anti-American sentiment grew in the Middle East and elsewhere which reflected in a variety of political reactions. These included the uprising in Saudi Arabia<sup>43</sup>, Pakistan and Libya, where anti-American rioting inspired by Iranian Islamic Revolution burned down US embassy to the ground while an attack on the US Embassy in Islamabad left two Americans dead. These developments actually threatened US vital interests in the region. The US feared that the Khomeini's Iran might use the "oil weapon" as a means for punishing or offending consuming nations, particularly the US and its ally Israel whom Khomeini saw as a Zionist-imperialist conspiracy to maintain imperial hegemony in the region. Although by that time the Gulf states disapproved Khomeini's call to withhold oil from exporting to the US, the US apprehended that only a reduction, let alone a suspension, of Middle Eastern oil production would have catastrophic consequences for the economy of the US and its allies Japan and Western European nations. Therefore, to get rid of such Iranian threat the US devised the plan of encouraging Saddam Hussein to invade Iran so that foreign military invasion would check the Iranian influence over the Gulf states where US economic interests were immense. And once the war started, the US saw it reasonable to support Iraq against Iran in the war anticipating that Iran might dominate the Persian Gulf which is the site of the world's largest oil reserves if won.<sup>44</sup>

**Seventhly**, since the conclusion of the 1978 Camp David Accords the US ally Egypt under Anwar el-Sadat had been isolated by all its fellow Arab nations. In this context, on May 1, 1979, Khomeini severed Iran's diplomatic relations with Egypt condemning Sadat's regime and called for his ouster which alarmed US a lot<sup>45</sup> and this in effect, made Khomeini's Iran an enduring enemy of the US. It is an establish fact that since the conclusion of the Camp David Accords in 1979, one of US policies has been not to tolerate anyone who is opposed to the Camp David Accords or who is opposed to US Arab allies that supports the Accords or Israel.<sup>46</sup> When Khomeini called for Sadat's ouster for 'making concession with Israel', the US moved to oust Khomeini by imposing a war on Iran without delay.

**Eighthly**, after the 1979 Islamic Revolution Ayatullah Imam Khomeini sought to export Iran's brand of revolution throughout the Persian Gulf and broader Middle East and this was amounted to the undermining of US regional influences.<sup>47</sup> Khomeini's call for 'export of revolution' was directed to the countries of the region namely Saudi Arabia, Bahrain, Kuwait, Qatar and the United Arab Emirates (UAE). Khomeini labeled the governments of these counties as 'US-backed' 'satanic' regimes and whose Islam he viewed as "American Islam". These all invited strong reaction from Washington.<sup>48</sup> Khomeini's attempts to export the revolution in the oil-rich Arab countries for his political designs, regional calculations not only alarmed Iraq and the Gulf states but these posed the most challenging and grave threats to US interests in the Middle East.<sup>49</sup> In this way, the Iranian threat became the common threat to Iraq, the US and its allies in the Gulf. As a result, all sang in the same tune with regard to the containment of revolutionary Iran to



prevent Iran from exporting its own brand of revolution. Particularly, the US found in Iraq its supporter in containing Islamic Republic of Iran in the form of ‘enemy’s enemy is my friend’. To the policy-makers in Washington, Saddam Hussein appeared as the only alternative who could stop the spread of ‘Islamic fundamentalism’ emanating from Tehran as they claimed, for being Iraq was the eastern gate of the Arab states, and thus could save the downfall of the US allies in the region. Therefore, it was natural for the US government to induce Saddam Hussein to go to war with Iran as it saw in militarily capable Iraq (Iran’s arch rival for centuries) as the military shield and the Gulf states’ money, and the American intelligence data to beat back the Iranian Islamist challenge.<sup>50</sup> Cheryl A. Rubenberg, a former Associate Professor in Department of Political Science at Florida International University specializing in the Middle East has stated that the commitment to rolling back the Iranian Islamic Revolution and replacing it with a friendly regime was an integral aspect of the US perspective on Iran since 1979.<sup>51</sup> The reflection of this statement is also seen in the remarks of Shireen T. Hunter who has convincingly argued that the US was bent on defeating Iran and thereby proving the bankruptcy of an Islamic Revolution to Muslims of other countries and thus there would be no appeal for Khomeini’s revolution, a threat to the interests of US and its allies in the region.<sup>52</sup> While my study helps to conclude that the US considered that an Iraqi attack on Iran would sap Iran’s boiling revolutionary energy and thus to prevent the export of revolution in the areas strategically important to Washington. Therefore, fearful of the fact that revolutionary Iran was, slowly but steadily, gaining influence in the region which was entirely contrary to US interests, a war was planned and devised by US—the schemer of the very deepest kind and of the first rate—to contain revolutionary Iran.

**Finally**, as mentioned in the previous section that in his memoirs entitled *Keeping Faith: Memoirs of a President* Jimmy Carter called the episode ‘real grief in our country’<sup>53</sup> which he would never forget and blamed the 444-day-long Hostage Crisis for destroying his chances of winning a second term in office. For tens of millions of Americans, the 1979-1981 Hostage Crisis marked the total failure of the Carter administration. As also mentioned in the previous section, initially, President Carter encouraged the media to highlight the irrationality of the Khomeini-led Islamic regime of Iran and thus to demonize the Islamic Republic of Iran in the eyes of the world and Americans in particular. At the same time, from the first day of the Hostage Crisis the images of blindfolded Americans, and Iranian crowds chanting “Death to America” were displayed daily on television screens across the US, while different media in the US headlined the Hostage Crisis almost daily. The ABC television channel, for example, regularly updated the American people on the Hostage Crisis in Tehran and ‘emotive interviews with the hostages’ families on this and other television programmes increased the pressure still further’ on the US President Carter. Of the programmes shown on different television channels in

the US, ABC's late-night "America Held Hostage" programme which later became *Nightline* began endlessly detailing the latest developments in the crisis. This *Nightline* programme eventually became the nightmare for the Americans who at one point began to press their government to bring back their fellow countrymen from Iran. "While on CBS Walter Cronkite, a man implicitly trusted by most Americans," states David Patrick Houghton in his *US Foreign Policy and the Iran Hostage Crisis*, "kept up the continual pressure on Carter by signing off his newscast each night with the number of days the hostages had been held in captivity."<sup>54</sup>

True, this was also feeding Americans' angry preoccupation with the Iranian hostage-takers and their captives, but the Carter administration was soon caught short by the American public's immediate emotional reaction to the hostage-taking. To the Americans, the hostage issue quickly became a reflection of America's powerlessness as the US government proved itself incapable of releasing its official representatives from their harsh ordeal. One scholar has categorically stated: "However, as the hostage drama dragged on without any prospect of negotiated resolution, the American public grew increasingly impatient with Carter and his diplomacy-based foreign policy toward Iran."<sup>55</sup> Thus at one point, Carter himself became the victim of his own policy when night after night until 444<sup>th</sup> night every American counted the days of America's humiliation. Carter who was due to face a Presidential Election in November 1980 felt intense pressure from the mass media, and from television in particular. Carter also faced mounting pressure to do something in the Congress.<sup>56</sup> Although Carter wanted to play the role of a national hero, after the failed rescue mission in April 1980, he eventually turned to be a zero and a total incompetent President in the eyes of the Americans. In fact, given this circumstance, an anguished Carter secretly planned to impose a war on Iran to divert the American attention from the traumatic Hostage Crisis. President Carter and his team hoped that Iran would depend on Washington for military supplies to cope with the war and thus agree to resolve the hostage issue as soon as possible.

But Carter's National Security Adviser Brzezinski advised the President to take some major steps not only to punish Iran but also "to unseat Khomeini." "I want to punish them as soon as our people have been released; really hit them. They must know they can't fool around with us."<sup>57</sup> However, the Carter administration approached carefully and when Iran genuinely wanted a solution to the Hostage Crisis, it foolishly went to encourage Iraq to invade Iran in the hope that the process of hostage release would be speedy because a war would create urgency for Iranian quest for arms and spare parts for which it would turn to the US and thus the Carter administration would achieve three goals: to punish Iran for the crime of hostage-taking, to resolve the Hostage Crisis, to ensure that Carter's re-election in November would be highly likely. Perhaps assuming the intrigues of the US, Khomeini on September 12, 1980, only ten days prior to the Iraqi

invasion of Iran said that the Great Satan was resorting to another stratagem after the failure of both the economic boycott and the military attack of April 25, 1980. Mentioning Iraq's Saddam Hussein as the "humble servant of America" and portraying Iraq as an American puppet serving US and Israeli interests. Khomeini concluded: "Iran has tried to sever all its relations with this Great Satan and it is for this reason that it now finds wars imposed upon it. America has urged Iraq to spill the blood of our young men, and it has compelled the countries that are subject to its influence to boycott us economically in the hope of defeating us."<sup>58</sup> Hence, this study suggests that the Iran-Iraq War was just like one of the pins in the ninepins game that came in the last of its series of US decisions to freeze Iran's assets, impose sanctions on Iran, and enforce the policy of isolation from the outside world.

Meanwhile, as tensions heightened between Iran and Iraq, the two countries severed their diplomatic relations. This followed the exchanges of war of words between Khomeini and Saddam Hussein.<sup>59</sup> The opportune moment was now at US hand. Focusing on Iran as the real source of danger, it quickly manipulated the hostile relations between Iran and Iraq by supplying intelligence to Iraqi President Saddam Hussein that Iran was militarily in a weak position due to Khomeini's purging of the army and the removal of US military aid to post-revolutionary Iran as well as the cancelation of \$10 billion arms deals with the US by the revolutionary government.<sup>60</sup> William Engdahl in his famous book entitled *A Century of War: Anglo-American Oil Politics and the New World Order* has accurately observed that "Washington had secretly encouraged Saddam Hussein to invade Iran in 1980, falsely feeding him intelligence data indicating early success."<sup>61</sup> In this way, chiefly due to the US role and encouragement events moved fast towards the eight-year-long bloody war that began on September 22 of 1980.

## II. The US Policy in the Iran-Iraq War and Iranian Responses

History records that after being emboldened by CIA's provocative reports of Iran's military weakness and expecting a quick, decisive victory over his unstable neighbour due to Iran's post-revolutionary chaos, international isolation, as well as convinced by CIA-provided information of inefficiency of Iran's military prowess, Iraq's Saddam Hussein who had a connection with the CIA since 1963, struck Iran on September 22, 1980.<sup>62</sup> Sitting on the sideline and basking on the Iranian willingness to settle the hostage issue, the US was seen to adopt a calculated policy for preserving its interests during the war period in the Persian Gulf region. Consequently, every single move of the US government during the war affected Iran-US bilateral relations tremendously. Interestingly, to befool the international community and as part of its calculated policy, the US officially declared neutrality in the conflict immediately once the war began.

Without condemning Iraq for the aggressive attack on Iran (unlike the Iraqi attack on Kuwait in 1990), President Carter on September 24, 1980, publicly "pledged" not to intervene in the Iran-

Iraq War by declaring: “Our own position is one of strict neutrality and we’re doing all we can through the United Nations and other means to bring a peaceful conclusion to this combat.”<sup>63</sup> Being convinced with such US stated position, scholars like Kenneth Pollack viewed that as neither combatant was a particular favourite of Washington, the US remained largely aloof for the first few years of the war.<sup>64</sup> Factually this is inaccurate, misleading and misrepresentation of the fact leading one to conclude that the US had nothing to do with the Iran-Iraq War. In his famous article entitled ‘International Crisis and Neutrality: United States Foreign Policy Toward the Iran-Iraq War’, which *Mercer Review* published as lead articles in 1991-1992 Francis A. Boyle has called US official policy toward the Iran-Iraq War the so-called neutrality. To Boyle, the US policy of neutrality toward the Iran-Iraq War, first adopted by the Carter administration and supposedly continued by his successor President Ronald Reagan, only misrepresented fact if not the law. The fact is that the US consistently ‘tilted’ in favour of Iraq throughout the war despite its public proclamation of neutrality.<sup>65</sup> This study concludes that again the traumatic hostage experience led the US to adopt such policy towards the Iran-Iraq War. An observer has rightly put: “The hostage crisis led indirectly to the next reason for hostility between the United States and Iran. This was the conduct of the United States during the Iran-Iraq War, from 1980 to 1988.”<sup>66</sup> Another reputed scholar on Middle East Stephen Kinzer has said that the hostage episode which poisoned the Iran-US relations soon changed the course of US political history and then led the US to support Iraq in its long and horrific war with Iran.<sup>67</sup>

The fact is also that the US had both stated and real motives in the Iran-Iraq War and pursued short-term (getting American hostages back and overthrowing the revolutionary government in Tehran) and long-term strategy (securing US-Israeli political and economic interests in the Persian Gulf by destroying both Muslim regional powers) to contain both revolutionary Iran openly and Iraq (both were enemies of Israel) secretly. To achieve its short-run and long-term goals the US adopted ‘tilt’ policy which was executed in two ways: stated or overt ‘tilt’ toward Iraq and unstated or covert ‘tilt’ toward Iran.<sup>68</sup> Throughout the war-years the US followed this ‘tilt’ policy in a calculated fashion. The US adopted that policy in the hope that through the war Iran and Iraq would contain each other to maintain the balance of power in the region. The US regarded the balance of power between Iran and Iraq as the guarantee to keep regional politics, economy and geopolitical relations stable and thus make Israel secured. The US also contributed a lot to prolong the war by tilting toward Iran and Iraq on one occasion or the other affecting Tehran-Washington considerably. This involved various approaches of the US over the courses of the war. As a consequence, once the Iran-Iraq War started, the Iran-US relations during the rest of the years of the 1980s evolved into following phases through the so-called US policy of neutrality in the war.

- a. **Iran-US Covert Communications: 1980-1981**
- b. **The Formation of anti-Iranian US-Iraqi Alliance: 1982-1984**
- c. **The so-called Iran-US Rapprochement (1985-1986): The Iran-gate or the Iran-Contra Affair**
- d. **The Iran-US Confrontational Relations: 1987-1988**

**a. Iran-US Covert Communications: 1980-1981**

Iraq invaded Iran at a time when Tehran-Washington relations were experiencing the most critical phase due to the traumatic hostage-taking. Therefore, when the Iran-Iraq War began with Iraqi invasion, the US was not unhappy to see its enemy was under attack. Under the circumstance, the US followed two-track policy to establish a sort of covert relations with Iran in an attempt to achieve its short-term goal of releasing American hostages from captivity. **In the first place**, the US government successfully influenced the UNSC to adopt Resolution 479 belatedly on September 28, 1980 which called upon Iran and Iraq to immediately cease any further uses of force and settle the dispute through negotiations, however, it did neither condemn nor even criticize the Iraqi aggression. What is more, when the resolution was adopted Iraqi troops were still in position of an occupying force since about 30,000 sq. kilometers of Iranian territory was under Iraqi control. Supporting the UNSC's move the US made it clear that it was against "any dismemberment of Iran". Why was such US position, is now a question to be answered? Dilip Hiro, a noted scholar on Iran's foreign policy, has observed that the US statement in the UNSC was meant to smooth the way for the release of the American hostages in Iran held since 1979.<sup>69</sup>

**In the second place**, the US government hoped to establish covert arms supply relations with Iran. Early in the war when Iran was cornered by Iraqi aggression, the State Department viewed that Iran's ability to conduct successful large-scale offensive operations "for at least the rest of the year" was seriously weakened and Iran's defeat at the hands of the Iraqi forces was just a matter of time. This exactly created the type of opportunity the US had been hoping for in order to establish a covert arms-supply relationship with Iran for releasing American hostages. However, when Iran did not come to seek arms from the US despite initial pressure from Iraqi military, the US considered the possibility of selling some military spare parts and munitions through Israeli agents to Iran. The Carter administration viewed that an offer of badly needed military spare parts to Iran in exchange for the release of hostages might prove tempting. Initially, the Carter administration decided in principle to deliver an estimated \$240 million in military equipment that had been already purchased and paid for but not received by Iran, as the delivery was frozen with Iran's other assets in the wake of US Embassy-taking in Tehran. On October 28, 1980, President Carter promised that if the hostages were released the US would

airlift the arms and spare parts that Iran had already paid for.<sup>70</sup> This actually paved the way for US covert arms sales to Iran which it did in a limited level through Israel.<sup>71</sup>

Although the US government tried two options with a high hope, to Carter's utter shock and dismay, nothing had happened as he desired: Iran did neither accept the UNSC call to end to the use of force nor seek arms willingly from the US at this stage of the Iran-Iraq War. Therefore, there was no end to the Hostage Crisis in the scene. True, Iran received some US arms through Israeli connection, the US had to expect the unexpected. Soon the US alarmingly noticed Iran's battlefield breakthrough against Iraq. After Iran's battlefield victories, the US hardened its position on Iran. Although later Iran settled the hostages issue with the US through the Algiers Agreement as discussed in the previous section on January 20, 1981 this did not bring about any significant policy change in US toward Iran once it hardened its position.<sup>72</sup> Nikki R. Keddie and Gary Sick have observed that after the end of the Hostage Crisis, US policy toward Iran was generally cool, distant, and restrained and the Reagan administration (1981-1988) has taken no hard-line or aggressive steps toward Iran. They have even argued that the US did not associate itself with the war aims of either Iran or Iraq and attempted to maintain a formal posture of neutrality.<sup>73</sup>

However, this study finds otherwise. In actuality, once the Hostage Crisis was resolved, the US cast its baleful gaze on Iran to take revenge for humiliating the superpower image by holding 52 Americans for 444 days. The new Hollywood actor-turned US President Ronald Reagan took a harder course of foreign policy towards the Islamic Republic of Iran. He sought to contain and isolate Iran which would actually become the official policy of the US ever since. The evidence of such US policy was demonstrated when questioned on January 28, 1981 (only eight days after the release of the hostages) during his first press conference about US future relations with Iran, Secretary of State of the new Reagan administration Alexander Haig clearly said that the way Iran handled the hostage issue and the cases of the three non-hostage US citizens who remained in Iranian prisons would be a factor in determining the US attitude toward Iran in the future.<sup>74</sup> In fact, as part of this US attitude toward Iran, Washington "actively backed Iran's regional nemesis, Saddam Hussein, throughout the eight years of the Iran-Iraq War."<sup>75</sup> At the same time, the US also worked for the prolongation of the war by denying victory of either of the belligerents. To that end, President Reagan secretly allowed Israel to sell American-made arms, spare parts and ammunition to Iran, even after the settlement of the Hostage Crisis.<sup>76</sup> Additionally, to convince the Iranian leadership that US-Israeli nexus was working for Iran during the beginning phase of the war and alongside supplying arms to Iran although in a limited volume, Israeli fighter jets in a surprise attack destroyed Iraqi nuclear power plant at Osirak on June 7, 1981 through Operation Opera (also known as the Operation Babylon). Israel did it with

US tacit consent because Saddam's Iraq was bitterly critical to Israel as well as US support for Israel.<sup>77</sup>

**b. The Formation of anti-Iranian US-Iraqi Alliance: 1982-1984**

As the US intended to contain revolutionary Iran, therefore, its policy of covert communication with Tehran did not prevent Washington to forge anti-Iran alliance with Baghdad since 1982. From the beginning of the war Iraqi forces won victories and they were able to hold Iranian territory for about 18 months. But US fear increased because from June 1981 Iranian army successfully started repelling Iraqi forces and liberated Iran's lost territory and turned the tide of the battle in favour of the consolidation of the Islamic Republic of Iran. The Iranian forces pushed Iraqi troops back to approximately the original border. After this major breakthrough and specifically by May 1983, Iran's goal became "War, War Until Victory." Then since late November 1981 Iran followed up its offensive codenamed *Tariq al-Quds* meaning Road to Jerusalem.<sup>78</sup> The US Arab and Israeli allies got nervously alarmed at this new development. In this context, Washington abandoned its policy of so-called neutrality and non-involvement in the war in favour of a declared "tilt" toward Iraq which led to the formation of anti-Iranian US-Iraqi alliance.<sup>79</sup> In this regard, US policy was: "Look, the enemy of my enemy is my friend; we're going to have to support the Iraqis in order to stop the Iranians."<sup>80</sup> US declared "tilt" policy toward Iraq and the formation of anti-Iranian US-Iraqi alliance demonstrated in the following four ways.

**(i) Delisting Iraq from the So-called List of Terrorism-Sponsored States and Providing War Materials to Iraq**

As the first step of the US official pro-Iraq policy towards the formation of anti-Iranian Iraq-US alliance, in February 1982, the US State Department delisted Iraq from the government's so-called list of states 'supporting international terrorism'. This action paved the way for US to provide arms and ammunitions, dual use equipment and high technology for both civil and military purposes, agricultural credits, and other logistic support to Iraq during the war.<sup>81</sup> Now following an important CIA officer's visit to Baghdad in the summer of 1982, the Reagan administration authorized the sale of 60 helicopters to Iraq for 'agricultural use' which Iraq was believed to be used in the war purpose. Washington even began issuing Baghdad high-tech export licenses which opened the door for Iraq to buy sophisticated equipment including its Weapons of Mass Destruction (hereinafter WMD) programmes and since then the US and its allies started selling Iraq virtually anything the latter wanted.<sup>82</sup> Given this fact, some scholars have claimed that in this way, the policy of the Reagan administration provided the means of Iraqi development of WMD, nuclear weapons, biotoxins, CW, and so on.<sup>83</sup> A direct secret intelligence link between Baghdad and Washington was also set up. Resultantly, since March 1982, the US was able to deliver critical intelligence to the Iraqis. US satellite photographs of

Iranian targets were readily transmitted to Baghdad through AWACS surveillance planes based in north-western Saudi Arabia since September 30, 1980, listening-post based in south-eastern Turkey and later on P-3 reconnaissance aircraft taking off from Kuwait. The passing of high-value military intelligence collected by US satellites and spy-planes regarding Iranian military deployments soon proved to be the most useful to Iraq's conduct of the war: it increased Iraqi military strength and Baghdad's defensive capabilities, enhanced Iraqi moral boost, and finally helped Iraq fix key flaws in the defensive capabilities that later proved important in Iranian defeat in the conflict.

**(ii) The Re-establishment of Iraq-US Diplomatic Relations**

Washington also intensified its efforts to reestablish its relations with Baghdad. Washington eventually restored diplomatic relations with Baghdad on November 26, 1984 after a 17-year break, which also opened a window of opportunity for the US to supply critical war and non-war materials, intelligence etc., to Iraq. Efraim Karsh has asserted that since December 1984, merely a month after the US and Iraq re-established their diplomatic relationship, the newly opened US Embassy in Baghdad began supplying the Iraqi armed forces with much-needed and vital military intelligence.<sup>84</sup> US 'tilting' policy to Iraq was also extended to include the US assistance in important commodity credit for agricultural products, support for Iraqi efforts to secure vital loans to bridge debt shortfall (for example, \$400 million in 1983, \$513 million in 1984 and \$652 million in 1987), support for a UN-sponsored condemnation of Iran to attacks on Gulf shipping while remaining virtually silent over similar Iraqi attack and continuation of the economic embargo the US imposed on Iran since 1979.<sup>85</sup>

**(iii) Imposing "Operation Staunch"<sup>86</sup>—a World-Wide Arms Embargo against Iran**

The Iranian battle-field victories in 1982 convinced the US that Iran would be able to crush Iraq. In the spring of 1982 the CIA, assessing the whole situation of the war concluded that "Iraq has essentially lost the war with Iran" and expressed concern about the implications on US of an Iraqi defeat.<sup>87</sup> The fear in Washington was that Iran would win the war which had other components: this would be the first stage of Iranian implementation of exporting revolution, the Iranians would capture Iraq, then follow up this unprecedented victory by igniting the majority Shi'i population of Iraq to take up arms against US interests all over the Middle East, march to Jerusalem and move to close the Straits of Hormuz, the single most important passageway for getting Middle Eastern oil to the West. What made the US most worrisome was that having secured its position in the war Iran sent 1,000 Revolutionary Guards to South Lebanon in 1982, following the Israeli invasion of Lebanon to train Shi'i groups including Hizbullah<sup>88</sup> to make sure that the massacres of Tall-al-Za'tar in 1976 would not be repeated. With the Iranian presence in Lebanon from June 1982, the US became panicky. Following a bombing at the US barracks in



Beirut on October 23, 1983, that left 241 killed, the US accused that armed and aided by Iran Islamist groups in Lebanon was causing havoc for US and Israel.

At this turn of Iran-US relations during the Iran-Iraq War wherein Iran was scoring victories and opening new war fronts, Iran eventually threatened to close the Straits of Hormuz in October 1983 in response to the ‘tanker war’, the extension of the Iran-Iraq War to sea. The US took the Iranian threat very seriously and viewed that Iranian threat of closing the Straits of Hormuz was just like the cutting the US economic lifeline. In view of such Iranian threat, President Reagan signed National Security Decision Directive (hereinafter NSDD) 114 on November 26, 1983 in the face of the escalation of the war into the Persian Gulf which later became the basis for the official US policy toward the Iran-Iraq War.<sup>89</sup> Then on January 19, 1984, Washington designated Iran as a “state-sponsor of terrorism,” and strongly advocated for shutting down Iran’s access to arms by imposing a world-wide arms embargo by the name of “Operation Staunch” on Iran to prevent a *Pax Irani*.<sup>90</sup> The US pursued a decidedly anti-Iranian foreign policy through this “Operation Staunch” to prevent Iran from acquiring weapons by imposing an international arms embargo. Ultimately it succeeded to stop most major weapons systems from reaching Iran from US allies. Contrarily, the US placed no impediments on its allies selling arms to Iraq.<sup>91</sup> This US double-standard role helped a lot to mold Iranian attitude toward US and led them to become more and more anti-American which eventually affected Iran-US relations to a great extent.

**(iv) The US Indifference to the Iraqi Use of Chemical Weapons (CW) on Iranians**

Major damage was done to Iran-US relations when the US shut its eyes towards the Iraqi use of Chemical Weapons (hereinafter CW) against Iranians. As the war progressed with some Iranian unexpected victories, the US took several measures to prevent Iran’s decisive victory. At first, the US government publicly announced that it had informed its Gulf allies who were supporting Iraq’s Saddam Hussein that Iran’s defeat of Iraq or Iraqi defeat at the hands of Iranians would be “contrary to United States interests”. In May 1984, the US made it clear that it was fully prepared to intervene militarily in the Iran-Iraq War to prevent Iranian victory. In this way, the US engaged in hostile and provocative military maneuvers and actions against Iran-not vice versa.<sup>92</sup> The same year, the US government provided support to the anti-regime forces that were active in Iran and their activities were coordinated from CIA’s station in Frankfurt, Germany. Finally, the US did the most devilish work to the Iranians and thus the most damaging thing happened to Iran-US relations during the war when Washington purposefully shut its eyes to the Iraqi use of CW on the Iranians and thus allowed Saddam Hussein to commit the most heinous crime in the history of human civilization. Iraq, fearful of a perceived defeat at the hand of Iran and emboldened by US continuous support, used CW—as a desperate measure and as a weapon of last resort to force Iran to end the war—against Iranians and killed thousands of unprotected Iranians and thus inflicted horrifying damage on them for which Iran saw in Saddam Hussein an

American Devil. Was there any rationale behind such Iranian viewing of Saddam Hussein? The answer is yes. An American analyst named Barbara Slavin has mentioned that as part of Washington's tilt policy it provided Baghdad with intelligence and weapons, including the components for the biological and chemical arms.<sup>93</sup>

Arguably, Iranian obstinacy to submit to US pressure even after imposing "Operation Staunch" led Washington to tolerate Iraq's use of CW against Iranians in the battlefield. Although Iran repeatedly complained of Iraqi horrifying chemical attacks at the UNSC since August 18, 1983, however, every time Iraq rejected Iranian claim as propaganda, while the US remained unmoved. This American indifferent attitude to the Iraqi use of CW against Iran manifested when on December 20, 1983, Reagan's Special Envoy Donald Rumsfeld met for 90 minutes with Saddam Hussein in Bagdad (see appendices) to discuss the state of Iraq-US relations but tactically avoided mentioning Iraqi use of CW despite the fact that Saddam's Iraq was using CW (including mustard gas, cyanide, the nerve agent Tabun, soman, and sarin, other choking agents such as phosgene) "almost daily".<sup>94</sup> Trita Parsi, an eminent scholar on Iran-Israel and the US has noted that the US tilt toward Iraq made Washington all the more reluctant to condemn Iraq's use of CW even though US intelligence confirmed Iran's accusations of Iraqi chemical attacks against Iran's soldiers and Kurdish insurgents. For its parts, Iran failed to enlist international sympathy due to US role in the UN. The US and its Western allies who adopted "seeing and hearing no evil" and turned a complete blind eye to the Iraqi use of CW on Iranians.<sup>95</sup> This actually gave a signal to Iraq that it could continue, and even escalate, the use of CW in the war to prevent Iranian victory. While this US indifference only widened the gulf between Tehran and Washington and justifiably deepened the Iranian hatred against and hostility towards the US.

**c. The so-called Iran-US Rapprochement (1985-1986): The Iran-Contra Affair<sup>96</sup>**

The US policy in the Iran-Iraq War since the mid-1980s was quite detrimental to Iranian interests and Tehran had to behave with utmost caution for two reasons: not to escalate Iran-US confrontation given the restoration of Iraq-US full diplomatic relations in November 1984, and to keep open the future door of Iran-US rapprochement. Some moderate and influential pragmatic elements within the Iranian leadership such as the Majlis speaker Akbar Hashemi Rafsanjani (later Iran's President) indicated that Iran-US hostility should not last until "Doomsday" (*Rouz-e Qiamat*) and that Iran would be prepared for reconciliation.<sup>97</sup> On the other hand, despite the fact that anti-Iranian view was dominant within the US policy-making establishment since 1979, some at the NSC were aware of Iran's strategic importance to US and they tried to prevent Iran's complete isolation lest Iran turned to the Soviet Union. Therefore, they encouraged US allies Japan and West Germany to maintain ties with Iran. This conciliatory position of Iran and apparently responsive mood of the US actually paved the way for the so-called Iran-US rapprochement which actually began with a set of complicated Israeli-instigated and US-initiated

Iran-Israel-US secret arms dealings from July 1985 to December 1986. Washington's such covert arms dealings with Tehran resulted in the development of "clandestine and indirect Iranian-American relations."<sup>98</sup>

Buttressed by Israelis and their supporters in the US, on August 6, 1985, President Reagan signed a secret finding authorizing a covert programme to provide weapons, funneled through Washington's Middle East ally—Israel—to US enemy state Iran. In the first order he authorized a shipment of 4,500 US-made Tube-Launched Optical-Tracking Wire-Guided (hereinafter TOW) anti-tank missiles to Israel to be sold to Iran. The first sale included 100 TOW missiles while on September 15 the second sales of 408 missiles reached Iran from Israel. A US hostage named Benjamin Weir was released on 15 September 1985 from Lebanon soon after the second sale was reached in Tehran from Israel which included 500 TOW anti-tank missiles. This initial shipment involved \$1 million most of which (\$850,000) was diverted to the Contras—rebels of Nicaragua and thus the Iran-Contra connection began.<sup>99</sup> Following the success of the first order, in January 17, 1986, another Presidential Order was issued authorizing for direct US arms sales to Iran. In accordance with the order Washington sold an additional 1000 TOW's to Tehran in February 1986. After meeting in Frankfurt on February 24-27, 1986, between Lieutenant Colonel Oliver North and his Iranian contacts another five hundred TOW missiles were delivered to Iran on February 27. From August 1985 to November 1986 Iran received from the US five separate covert shipments that included 2008 TOW missiles, 235 Homing-All-the-Way-Killer (hereinafter HAWK) anti-aircraft missiles, HAWK parts, and other spare parts. The US government received from Iran about \$64 million. However, the US secret arms dealings with Iran came to an abrupt halt in early November 1986 following the disclosure of the affairs. Although both Iranian and US delegations met in Geneva on November 8, and again in Frankfurt on December 14, 1986, however, the US government closed the dialogue between Tehran and Washington for political reasons.

At this point of examination of Iran-US relations during the Iran-Iraq War we turn to the US motives of the arms supplies to Iran to understand the complex course of Iran-US secret interactions during the 18 months period of covert arms supply to Iran by the US via its vital ally Israel. The US had two sets of motives for the continuation of Tehran-Washington covert arms communication: stated and real. The stated objectives were many. **Firstly**, the US government had a defensible and widely publicized objective of securing the release of the American and other Western citizens who were held hostages by pro-Iranian Sh'ia Hizbullah in Lebanon in exchange for arms supply to Iran. **Secondly**, Iran's geostrategic significance (because of its oil reserves and strategic location) played an important part to the so-called secret arms dealings.<sup>100</sup> **Thirdly**, US view was that Iranian defeat might leave the Persian Gulf open to the Soviet penetration. The US also viewed that the total absence of its contact and dialogue with Iran could

play directly into the hands of the Soviet Union.<sup>101</sup> In the context of an Iranian economic delegation's visit to the Soviet Union in September 1985, the US government viewed that a hostile Iran could threaten the US allies in the Gulf and eventually Israel. For that reason the US government adopted a policy to establish contact with moderate elements within and outside the government of Iran and provided arms, equipment and related material "in order to enhance the credibility of these elements in their effort to achieve a more pro-U.S. government in Iran by demonstrating their ability to obtain requisite resources to defend their country against Iraq and intervention by the Soviet Union."<sup>102</sup>

**Fourthly**, the Reagan administration also believed that the US secret engagements with Iran would be as potential strategic opening to Tehran, with the aim of either overthrowing Khomeini or replacing him by some other means.<sup>103</sup> **Fifthly**, since April 1980, there were no diplomatic ties between Tehran and Washington, therefore, through the so-called rapprochement with Iran, the US wanted to have intelligence report about Iran and thus to check Soviet challenge or influence in the region and to prevent Iranian export of revolution to other Gulf States and thus to save its Gulf allies.<sup>104</sup> **Finally**, US also developed covert arms supply relationship with Iran as part of "Washington's terrorist war against Nicaragua".<sup>105</sup>

These were the stated objectives of US secret arms supply to its enemy country—Iran. The US real motives, however, were diametrically opposite to that of the stated motives. History provides ample evidences that when the US entered the secret arms dealings with Iran, the humiliating memories of the Hostage Crisis of 1979-1981 were still fresh in the American minds and Washington's official arms embargo on Iran—the 'Operation Staunch' (adopted in early 1984)—was still in place. According to many observers, only thing Iran did by this time was that it spontaneously offered mediation in the release of US hostages in Lebanon in 1986. Certainly, this was not enough for US to engage with Iran secretly or to improve Tehran-Washington relations risking its own image at home and abroad (in particular, among US Arab and Gulf allies). Besides, all the arms dealings took place violating the US announced policy of denying weapons to nations aiding terrorists (in January 1984, the US singled out Iran as terrorism-sponsor state). What is more, while the US supplied arms to Iran, simultaneously it was supporting Iraq by all means at its disposal.<sup>106</sup> Therefore, the whole episode gives rise to serious suspicions among the scholars, historians, political scientists alike. An in-depth study will help us to break the entanglement of the episode and defuse the suspicions regarding US secret involvement with Iran during the 1985-1986 period.

To begin, we first need to review the US real motive behind the secret arms supply to Iran in the light of a question: How could the US ever consider, if not decide to sell weapons to its number one enemy country (since the 1979 traumatic Hostage Crisis) which was under Imam Khomeini

whom the Americans hated most for his derogatory remarks about the US, Israel and the White House, and whose Islamic regime had not been recognized by Washington, and whose military victory over Iraq was contrary to the interests of the US and its allies in the region? James A Bill has related that the Hostage Crisis left a legacy of distrust, misunderstanding and hatred and during the testimony of NSC officials during the July 1987 Select Committee Hearings on the Iran-Contra affair it became clear that it was the lingering embarrassment of the painful 1979-1981 hostage issue that helped promote the Iran-Contra secret arms deal.<sup>107</sup> James A. Bill has also documented quoting Rober McFarlane that at one point when Reagan was queried about the dangers of selling arms to what many in the US considered a terrorist state, he reportedly responded that “I will be glad to take all the heat for that.”<sup>108</sup> This again shows that the President was ready for sacrificing his presidency at the expense of achieving US-Israeli real goals in the Iran-Iraq War by secretly engaging with Iran and supplying it some advanced weaponry.

Given this fact, there is no mistaking that the US adopted a long-term hidden political agenda since the start of the Iran-Iraq War. The secret arms transfer to Iran was a part of that agenda. James M. McCormick has put: “It is significant that throughout the entire episode and during the investigations afterward, President Reagan consistently denied both that he knew that arms sales profits were being transferred to the Contras and that the arms sales were tied solely to the freeing of American hostages held in Lebanon.”<sup>109</sup> While Amiya Rao, wrote in the *Economic and Political Weekly* in September 1987 that before the Congressional Committee, Lieutenant Colonel Oliver North disclosed that every time he met with the Iranian representatives in Frankfurt for arms sales to Iran, he lied to them. He assured them that the US supported Iran in the war and like Iran it wanted to see Saddam Hussein of Iraq overthrown. He even went to tell the Iranian representatives that the US would defend Iran against any attack by the Soviet Union.<sup>110</sup> The relevant question is why?

History documents that a major aim was to overthrow the Ayatullah Khomeini regime by the “moderates” in the military which was originally an Israeli plan that was later adopted by the US administration. Noam Chomsky supported this position. Other real motives included Israeli-instigated anti-Arabism, continuation of the Iran-Iraq War and thus destroying the military might of two Muslim powers in the region, and creating opportunity for making exorbitant profits through sale of arms to Iran. Of them, preventing victory of either side in the Iran-Iraq War was an important part of the balancing policy of the US.<sup>111</sup> Therefore, the supply of arms and intelligence to both Iran and Iraq was the essence of the US policy during the war period. Given the fact, Sasan Fayazmanesh has concluded that once put in a historical context, the Iran-Contra “affair was the logical outcome of the dual containment policy pursued for a long time by the US and Israel.”<sup>112</sup> The US real motive, in this regard, was best reflected in the remarks of the former

US Secretary of State and the incumbent Secretary of Haig's political mentor Henry Kissinger made in February 1984. Known as the consummate *Realpolitik* practitioner Henry Kissinger stated, "...it was the interest of the United States for the war to go on indefinitely as it weakened two states who had strongly opposed the United States influence in the area".<sup>113</sup> However, what Kissinger did not mention in his statement was that both Iran and Iraq were virulent hostile to US ally Israel. The *New York Times* on May 22, 1984 reported that with regard to the US goal and policy in the war Henry Kissinger's contention was that "the ultimate American interests" is that "both should lose."<sup>114</sup> The time of the US secret arms engagement with Iran also demonstrates the fact that the US wanted the war to continue. In 1984 the balance of military power moved in Iraq's favour. However, it was not in the interest of the US that Iraq win the war outright. Therefore, the US reversed its stance whenever it considered appropriate and sold weapons secretly to Iran while it continued to help Iraq. This actually indicates that the US benefitted from the continuation of the war, which weakened both countries.<sup>115</sup>

In the light of above analysis, it is not difficult to conclude that the US (and Israeli) real motives of supplying arms overtly to Iraq and covertly to Iran was to destroy the military might of these two Muslim countries and to prevent them from winning. The US viewed the victory of both warring parties negatively. If Iran won the war, it would resume its old place as regional powerhouse, threatening to the moderate Arab states who were US allies, thus causing harm to US-Israeli interests in the region. Conversely, if an anti-Israeli Iraq proved victorious in the long run, it would pose a direct military threat to US ally Israel and the region. This truism demonstrated in Trita Parsi's opinion when he has pointed out that the logic behind Washington's secret arms dealings with Tehran was simple and clear: so long as Iran and Iraq fought each other, neither one could fight Israel. On December 8, 1991, the *New York Times* disclosed the similar fact.<sup>116</sup> Therefore, because of its own political agenda Israel devised a plot by promoting the so-called Tehran-Washington rapprochement in the summer of 1985. For its part, Iran as the needed party with some hesitation and speculation of a strong reaction from the conservatives welcomed the US move. However, Iranian isolation from the international community, mounting pressures of the war, plus alarming Soviet activities in neighbouring Afghanistan also prompted Iran to participate in a secret engagement with US. Iran even indicated that it was prepared to do whatever was necessary to obtain arms, including bargaining with the US. Conversely, the Reagan administration did not approach to Tehran with good intention, rather it provided Iran with some weapons with a view to implementing its hidden agenda as stated above. Therefore, the so-called Iran-US rapprochement failed to produce any breakthrough in Iran-US relations. What is more, immediately after the leak-out of the US secret communication with Iran it became a major scandal for the Reagan administration which affected the subsequent Iran-US relations very negatively.

**d. The Iran-US Confrontational Relations: 1987-1988**

The secret arms dealings between Tehran and Washington or the Iran-Contra affair did not revive the pre-1979 closeness of Iran-US relationship, but the leak-out of these secret dealings produced two results. In the short-term, the Iran-Contra Affair gave birth to the confrontational phase of Iran-US relations during 1987-1988 period, when the US finally and decidedly tilted toward Iraq fearful of Iraqi and US Gulf allies' reactions. While in the long-term, the Iran-Contra Affair permanently put a full-stop on the Iran-US rapprochement. The episode created a major controversy between the executive and legislative branches of US government finally emboldened those who opposed Iran-US rapprochement home and abroad. Consequently, since then the US took a more hostile stance toward Iran. This position eventually constituted a cardinal principle of US policy toward Iran which ultimately undermined future prospects for Iran-US relations. As a result, the year 1987 began with the direct military confrontation between Iran and US and the shift of US *Feindbild* (bogeyman or devil) from the Soviet Union to the Islamic Republic of Iran.<sup>117</sup> Therefore, since 1987 the US was seen directly engaged militarily in the Persian Gulf against Iranian forces.<sup>118</sup>

Meanwhile, the American arrival in the Persian Gulf in the summer of 1987 at the invitation of Kuwait indeed posed a serious dilemma to Iran as to whether it continued the war and risk the prospect of a major confrontation with US or ended the war with no clear victory. Iranian leaders claimed that this was the clear manifestation of US hostility towards the Islamic regime. They accused the US (and the Soviet Union) of hatching a "conspiracy" against the Iranian Islamic Revolution, the purpose of which was to isolate, encircle, and finally destroy the Islamic regime. Iranian leadership also believed that the US intended to 'internationalize' the Iran-Iraq War in order to prevent an Iranian victory in the battlefield. In this context, Iran sought to contain the spread of the war to its Gulf neighbours and sought to avoid getting involved in a direct armed conflict with the US. This was demonstrated when the US-flagged supertanker *Bridgeton* hit an Iranian mine in July and in August (of 1987) another US tanker hit a mine of Fujaria but Iran remained restrained.<sup>119</sup> However, this was not Iran's final stance. Soon it risked of being a target of US military attack by responding militarily to some of US military exchanges. Consequently, there was a low-intensity limited military engagement between Iran and US in the Persian Gulf during this stage of the Iran-Iraq War. The first direct confrontation between Iranian and US military forces occurred on September 22, 1987, when a US Army Special Forces helicopter opened fire on an Iranian vessel on the pretext that it was laying mines fifty miles north of Bahrain and several patrol boats in the Persian Gulf. Iranians viewed the US actions as something akin to declaration of war against Iran. Iranian interior Minister Mohtashami called all Iranians to be prepared for a full-fledged war with the US in the Gulf. While Iran's President Ali

Khamenei came up with cautious reactions as he feared that US actions in the Persian Gulf would lead to an American invasion of Iran.<sup>120</sup>

As time proceeded, more military engagements between Iran and the US followed and thus Iran was drawn increasingly into direct conflict with the US. From October 8 to 22 of 1987, US sank three Iranian patrol boats in the Persian Gulf and Iran fired missiles at unprotected US-owned tankers. On October 16, 1987, a tanker named *Sea Isle City* was struck at anchor in Kuwaiti waters by an Iranian silkworm missile. The US Navy attacked the Iranian Rostam oil platform in retaliation. Iran retaliated not only by attacking US ships or Navy but also by firing Silkworm missiles from Faw at Kuwait's oil loading terminal at Mina al-Ahmadi. This sudden escalation of the conflict saw US troops for the first time kill Iranian sailors and brought Iran and US one step closer to major military confrontation. The most significant naval battles occurred in early April 1988, when the US Navy destroyed a substantial proportion of the Iranian Navy. On April 14, 1988, the *USS B. Roberts* frigate struck a mine in the Persian Gulf which was believed to be dropped by Iran to stop oil tanker traffic as part of its war effort with Iraq. Four days later, another US guided-missile frigate, the Oliver Hazard Perry-class *Samuel P. Roberts*, hit an Iranian-laid mine in the Persian Gulf, which almost sank the ship. No lives were lost, but the ship underwent almost \$90 million in repairs and the incident prompted immediate US retaliation against Iranian assets via "Operation Praying Mantis" on April 18, 1988. Reportedly, this was the largest US naval operation since the WWII in retaliation. Iran lost about a quarter of its larger naval ships in a one-day engagement with the US Navy, including one frigate sunk and another badly damaged.<sup>121</sup> Iran also lost a significant portion of its naval force: six vessels including two (out of three) frigates while about 49 American personnel and an unknown number of Iranian were killed during the Iran-US military confrontations. Thus, the clashes between Iran and the US caused a dramatic worsening of the existing Iran-US relations and the situation in the Persian Gulf.

During the Iran-Iraq War, the last major confrontational event between Iran and US took place on July 3, 1988. With the aim of preventing Iranian victory the US supported Iraq's Saddam Hussein all the way in the war and now being impatient at the Iranian resilience to continue the war at a time when world attention quickly shifted back to the basics of Middle East politics as the Palestinians began direct and violent confrontation in the name of the first *Intifada* or Mass Uprising (1987-1991) in Gaza Strip and West Bank in late 1987 with the US sole vital ally in the Middle East—Israel, one of the US Navy's most technologically-advanced cruisers, the *USS Vincennes* entered into Iranian waters from international waters and then shot down an Iranian civilian airliner by the name of Iran Air Flight 655, a commercial flight boarding 290 passengers which was flying over Iranian airspace. The US shooting killed all passengers including 66 children. The downing of the passenger plane caused international consternation and greatly



embarrassed the Ronald Reagan administration. Iran saw this event as provoking as well as an epitome of an undeclared or covert war against the Islamic regime. Tehran authority accused the US of deliberately shooting down the airliner and some of them even asked for revenge. Iran also held the view that US downing of Iran Air Flight 655 was state-sponsored terrorism, while many Iranians took the tragedy as a sign that the US was now intervening directly against their civilian population. Iran's Foreign Minister Ali Akbar Velayati called this event "the most inhumane military attack in the history of civilian aviation ... a barbaric massacre."<sup>122</sup>

Contrarily, the official US version of explanation of the fatal incident was that the *USS Vincennes* mistook the giant passenger plane for an American-made Grumman F-14 Tomcat fighter. The US persisted in saying that this was an accident which sounds factually less convincing<sup>123</sup> which is why, the US downing of Iran Air Flight 655 left a long painful legacy on the Iranians as well as on Iran-US relations. One scholar has pointed out, "nothing was more damaging to the U.S. reputation in Iranian eyes than the shooting down of Iran Air flight 655 over the Persian Gulf."<sup>124</sup> Another scholar has concluded: "The Iran flight 655 tragedy is permanently seared in the collective Iranian memory."<sup>125</sup> In fact the US downing of Iran Air Flight 655 plunged Iran-US relations further into the deep freeze.<sup>126</sup> Following the incident although the US government issued a "note of regret" about the loss of innocent lives, it neither admitted responsibility nor apologized for the destruction of Iran Air Flight 655. US Navy officials also found no wrongdoing on the part of the *Vincennes* crew. What appeared more insulting to the Iranians was that the men of the *Vincennes* were all awarded Combat Action Ribbons. Commander Lustig, the air-warfare co-coordinator on board the *Vincennes*, received the US Navy's Commendation Medal for 'heroic achievement'; his 'ability to maintain his poise and confidence under fire' having enabled him to 'quickly and precisely complete the firing procedure.' Captain Rogers and Lieutenant Commander Lustig were later awarded the Legion of Merit for their performance on July 3, 1988.<sup>127</sup> Later on, although the US government settled the issue after eight years, it never officially apologized and it has refused to apologize till this day, which is still defining factor for Iran-US hostile relations.

There is no dispute that the US downing of Iran Air Flight 655 contributed to the end of the Iran-Iraq War.<sup>128</sup> This helps one to conclude that the Iran-Iraq War was a game plan of the US which encouraged Iran's enemy Saddam Hussein to start the war then it determined the courses of the war and finally terminated the war at will. Because following the July 3 incident, it had become clear to the Iranians that Iran was engaged in a direct war with the US, a war that Iran could not possibly win while Khomeini realized that Iran could not prevail so long as the 'Great Satan' was working against the Islamic Republic of Iran. Iran now accepted unconditionally UNSC Resolution 598 and agreed to a cease-fire which brought an end to the eight-year long war with

Iraq. A cease-fire was agreed upon through UN declaration on August 8, 1988, the now famous “8-8-88” date and it put in to effect on August 20, 1988.

### III. The Legacy of Iran-Iraq War on Iran-US Relations

In the light of the different types of interactions between Iran and the US from covert communication to imposing arms embargo to secret arms dealings to low-intensity military engagements occurred during the Iran-Iraq War of 1980-1988 analyzed, interpreted, counter-interpreted and re-interpreted in this long section, a couple of conclusions can be drawn regarding the Iran-US relations. **Firstly**, Iran and the US became arch enemies in the context of the Iran-Iraq War. Historically, Iranians from the day first considered the Iraqi-initiated war as an American-imposed war on their country and they still blame the US for the eight-year blood-bath which is not distant from the fact. Their leaders firmly believed that Iraqi attack had been instigated by the US as a way of weakening Islamic revolutionary Iran.<sup>129</sup> **Secondly**, the war experiences left Iran more anti-American than ever. Iranian saw beforehand that how Washington delayed in adopting a resolution but not criticizing Iraq for initiating the attack on Iran once the war began. Then they closely noticed how the growing Iraq-US relations and their efforts acted against Tehran’s interests during the war. They also noticed that their country mostly fought the war alone and when it was scoring victories, it was placed under strict arms sanctions—Operation Staunch—by the US. And thus during the Iran-Iraq War the US virtually isolated Iran from international community. Additionally, Iranians saw how by declaring neutrality, the US in actuality, contributed a lot to prolong the war by tilting toward Iran and Iraq on one occasion or the other so that neither side won a decisive breakthrough. Yet, US tilting toward Iraq and its political, economic, strategic, and military and diplomatic support for Iraq increased to the point where, in the end, “Washington’s role became an important factor in Iran’s defeat” in the war. Iran not only witnessed how the US worked for preventing their victory in the war but also saw how the US played its part in sustaining Iraq and, thereby, in forcing Iran, after eight years of war, to accept the ceasefire in 1988. This was another Iranian bitter experience that decisively shaped their thinking regarding the US motives. This justifiably demonstrates why the Iran’s leadership is still suspicious of US conspiracy.

Iranians also watched painfully the anti-Iranian and hostile character of US when its Navy cruiser the *USS Vincennes* shot down the Iran Air 655 on July 3, 1988 without any provocation and killed 290 civilians. This was “another critical event in the formation of the legacy of mistrust between the two powers.”<sup>130</sup> The worst Iranian experience in the war was that how emboldened by US support in the UNSC Iraq employed CW many times during the war against the Iranians troops and civilians, most of whom perished instantly and other became crippled for life. The US first helped Iraq in the latter’s use of CW more effectively by providing it with satellite imagery of Iranian troop positions and then turned a blind eye to Iraqi use of CW against Iranian troops.

In fact, for years, the US desired that the preferred outcome of the war was a stalemate—and, arguably, this is how the war ended—or even an Iraqi victory, but under no circumstance an Iranian victory. For this the US time and again chose to close its eyes to Iraqi use of CW on Iranians.<sup>131</sup> This “seeing-and-hearing-no-evil” the attitude of the US to Saddam Hussein’s misdeeds left a devastating legacy on Iranian world view and this along with US hypocrisy only doubled the trouble: it increased anti-Americanism in Iran firmly grounded on anti-Iranian US policy in the 1980s which also increased Iran-US hostility. A noted scholar has put: “Each time Iran perceived Washington lurking behind an Iraqi attack with chemical weapons, each time Iran appealed to international organizations in protest against the use of such weapons only to have their appeals fall on deaf ears due to U.S. intervention-with each perceived transgression, the more deeply the characterization of the United States as an enemy became integrated into the Iranian national narrative.”<sup>132</sup> Therefore, Iranians were outraged not only by Iraq’s use of CW, most of their wrath went against the US who approved Iraq to use CW against them to prevent their victory in the war. As a result, Iran’s leadership damned efforts to improve relations with the US during and after the war. Thus the net effect of the war on Iran-US relations was that the war made the US an irreconcilable enemy of the Islamic Republic of Iran. Consequently, the Iran-Iraq War ended with more Iran-US hostility than ever.

#### **B. Iran-US Relations after the Iran-Iraq War Up to June 3, 1989**

Historically, the Iran-Iraq War is seen as the power politics in Iran-US relations. Designed as ‘tit-for-tat’ game by the US the war was stretched to long eight years to sap the vigour of the Iranian revolutionary regime (as well that of Iraq). Evidences show that alongside its extreme opposition to the Islamic Republic of Iran, Washington played very critical and damaging role for Iran during the Iran-Iraq War with the aim of containing revolutionary Iran. Surprisingly, the US saw Iran remained revolutionary even after the devastating war and it was ready to challenge the US-NATO presence throughout the Middle East. Therefore, US policy of containment of the Islamic Republic of Iran continued. While Imam Khomeini, who during the war period had experienced US conspiracies to weaken Islamic regime of Iran, showed no sign of developing or normalizing Iran’s relations with the US. Additionally, Khomeini also saw the continuation of US opposition to the Islamic regime. Therefore, he never relented in his condemnations and exhortations against the US, which he continued to term the “Great Satan” into the late 1980s. As a result, hostility between Iran and the US continued unabated.

Although there was an opportunity in the wake of the Iran-Iraq War for Iran-US reconciliation chiefly due to the Iranian positive gestures, but the opportunity was missed because of US unresponsive attitude. Following the Iran-Iraq War, Iranian moderates gained ground in Iranian politics. They opted for the risks of an adventurous foreign policy after having learnt lesson from the negative consequences of past foreign policy mistakes. They tried hard to improve relations

with the West and to end hostility with the US and thus to end Iran's isolation in the international community. This resulted in an open debate about the wisdom of Iran's reconciliation with the US. The moderates emphatically stressed that Iran simply did not have the resources to rebuild the war-ravaged country in any sort of rapid fashion without foreign assistance. Realizing these hard realities, Imam Khomeini recognized the validity of the pragmatists' arguments and allowed reluctantly the pragmatists to start mending relationship with foreign nations, including France, Germany, Britain, and Kuwait. However, a modest rapprochement with a few Western nations was one thing, but making up with the Great Satan—the US—was entirely a different thing since any reconciliation with the US went against the spirit of the Islamic Revolution given its “neither East, nor West” motto. Yet, under critical post-war socio-economic situation, Khomeini's Iran turned to the US. Moreover, following the cease-fire agreement in August 1988, Iran was anxious for the full implementation of the provisions of UNSC Resolution 598, including the withdrawal of Iraqi troops, which still occupied parts of its territory, and recognition of the validity of the Algiers Agreement of 1975, which Iraq had denounced at the start of the war. After the war ended, Iran wanted full implementation of the Resolution 598 and withdrawal of Iraqi forces from Iranian territories with the help of the US.

Analysts are in agreement that to achieve these goals, the Islamic Republic of Iran was willing to be forthcoming with the US.<sup>133</sup> In October 1988, Iran even helped in releasing Mithinleshwar Singh, an Indian-born US resident who had been held hostage in Lebanon by an Islamic group—the Islamic Jihad for twenty months. This shows that owing to the high price it paid for the Hostage Crisis of 1979-1981, Iran attempted to avoid direct association with what Washington terms ‘terrorism.’<sup>134</sup> In response to such Iranian gesture, in January 1989, the US government cautiously highlighted for better relations with Iran. In his inaugural address, President George W. H. Bush sought Iranian help in releasing the remaining US hostages in Lebanon and assured the Islamic Republic of Iran that “Goodwill begets goodwill.”<sup>135</sup> The irony of the fact is that despite such assurances and although changes in Tehran created new opportunities to begin some movement in the direction of ending Iran-US hostility even when Khomeini was alive, Washington remained indifferent to further Iranian overtures for improving Tehran-Washington relations for a number of reasons.

Firstly, the elimination of the Soviet security threat to the Persian Gulf because of the Soviet defeat in Afghanistan on February 15, 1989 and thus the erosion of Iran's strategic significance to the US. Secondly, US Arab ally Egypt who as the only Arab Muslim state concluded a peace treaty (Camp David Accord) recognizing Israel, strongly opposed to Iran-US reconciliation. Thirdly, US ally Israel itself became outspoken for an “Arab Option” strategy after the Camp David Accords and after Iran was lost to the Islamists whom it viewed as anti-Israeli and anti-US. For that Israel influenced Washington not to respond Iranian call. Fourthly, the US

government was unhappy with Tehran over the unresolved hostage problem in Lebanon and the continued captivity of American and other Western hostages there. Morally as well as politically, the US found it difficult to take any positive steps toward Iran as long as its citizens were held captive by pro-Iranian factions in Lebanon. Finally, the US which was watching factional infighting in Iran in the wake of the war and delaying to pay compensation to the victims of the *Vincennes* attack adopted a waiting game tactic in the belief that a regime change was highly likely.<sup>136</sup> Apparently, Iran's military weakness and mounting economic difficulties through 1988 enhanced US unwillingness to compromise or to be forthcoming with Iran. As a result, a favorable opportunity to start a process of reconciliation between Iran and the US was thus missed while Khomeini was still alive.<sup>137</sup> Kenneth M. Pollack, however, has maintained that Imam Khomeini's death sentence on Salman Rushdie (1947- )<sup>138</sup> was responsible for overturning the liberalizing trends in both foreign and domestic affairs and consequently, Iran's reconciliation with the West in particular, the US was not possible.<sup>139</sup> Factually, the real case as to why Iran's reconciliation was not possible with the US during this time remains elsewhere which will be elaborated in the next section.

### **Conclusion**

Since 1979 the governments of Iran and the US have developed their foreign policy in an atmosphere of paranoia, hatred, ignorance, and emotion. Such US policy towards Iran was evident during the 1980s which tremendously affected overall Iran-US relations. Since its diplomatic break-up in April 7, 1979, no genuine attempt was made by the US to restore diplomatic relations with Iran. All the US had done during the war years was to make every effort to contain revolutionary Iran which it did successfully. On the other hand, during the war due to the urgent necessity to cope with the Iraqi military pressure, although Tehran approached to Washington genuinely it did not go to restore Tehran-Washington relations because of dominant anti-Americanism in Iran. In this context, Ayatullah Imam Khomeini died on June 3, 1989. True with his death a decade of Iran-US hostile relations came to an end, however, before he died Khomeini left a 29-page handwritten will in which he denounced the leadership of the US as terrorists who 'terrorise the powerless nations of the world'.<sup>140</sup> In this way, Khomeini left Iran with an anti-American legacy for the generations to come. However, the changed perspectives before and following Khomeini's death and harsh realities following the Iran-Iraq War had compelled Tehran approach to Washington with genuine intention of normalizing Iran-US relations. Oddly, Washington remained unmoved. Therefore, there was neither a sort of reconciliation between Iran and the US nor an improved Iran-US relationship during the Khomeini era.

Notes and References of Section III of Chapter 4

1. Originally, the Iran–Iraq War was referred to as the Gulf War until the Gulf War of 1991. After the 1991 Gulf War, the Iran-Iraq War was referred to as the First Gulf War, while the 1991 Gulf War became known as the Second Gulf War (however, at present, the Second Gulf War has become known as the 1991 Gulf War). In Iran, the Iran-Iraq War is known as the Holy Defence (*Defa'-e Moqaddas*) and the Imposed War (*Jang-e Tahmili*), based on the argument and belief that the US, humiliated by the hostage affair at the Iranians' hands, encouraged Iraq to wage war against Iran. In Iraq, the conflict was referred to as Saddam's Qadisiyyah, in reference to the Battle of al-Qadisiyyah that took place in the seventh century with an Arab victory over the Persians. See: Lawrence G. Potter and Gary G. Sick (ed.), *Iran, Iraq and the Legacies of War*, Palgrave Macmillan, USA, 2004, p. 4
2. David Farber, *Taken Hostage: ... op., cit.*, p. 178.
3. Ayatullah Imam Khomeini had lived for thirteen years since 1965 in exile at Najaf, Iraq. In 1978 he was expelled by Iraq's strong man Saddam Hussein at the Shah's request. To some, Khomeini could not forget his expulsion and thus he could not forgive Saddam Hussein.
4. Saddam Hussein was seeking to have Iraq replace Iran as the preponderant power in the Gulf after the fall of the US-backed Shah while Khomeini was determined to retain Iran's dominating role in the region.
5. The Shatt al-Arab waterway, a navigable stream formed by the confluence of the Tigris and the Euphrates Rivers just above the Iraqi port of Basra and flowing southwards into the headwaters of the Persian Gulf runs along the Iran-Iraq border by the *thalweg* line principle. Historically, Iran and Iraq have important ports on the Shatt al-Arab. For Iraq, the river is the only outlet to the Persian Gulf. Historically, Iraq has tried to claim the entire Shatt al-Arab river and both banks, while Iran wanted half of it. During the Iran-US tensed relations over the Hostage Crisis, this Shatt al-Arab dispute became the trigger that set off the eight-year-long Iran-Iraq War.
6. For more about the US role in the starting of the Iran-Iraq War see: M.S. El Azhary (ed.), *The Iran-Iraq War: An Historical, Economic and Political Analysis*, Croom Helm, London, 1984; Dilip Hiro, *The Longest War: The Iran-Iraq Military Conflict*, Routledge, USA, 1991; Lawrence G. Potter and Gary G. Sick (ed.), *Iran, Iraq and the Legacies of War*, Palgrave Macmillan, USA, 2004; Adam Tarock, *The Superpowers' Involvement in the Iran-Iraq War*, Nova Science Publishers, Inc., New York, 1998; Bryan R. Gibson, *Covert Relationship: American Foreign Policy, Intelligence, and the Iran-Iraq War, 1980-1988*, Praeger, USA, 2010, p. 25; Sasan Fayazmanesh, *The United States and Iran: Sanctions, Wars, and the Policy of Containment*, Routledge, USA, 2008.
7. Gholam Hossein Razi, 'An Alternative Paradigm to State Rationality in Foreign Policy: The Iran-Iraq War', *The Western Political Quarterly*, Vol. 41, No. 4, December, 1988, pp. 700-701.
8. Estimates vary, but by any standard, the costs of the brutal Iran-Iraq War were enormous: economic costs were over \$1,000 billion (\$200 billion direct and another \$1,000 billion indirect), and human casualties were one million.
9. Both quoted in Ray Takeyh, *Guardians of the Revolution: ..., op., cit.*, p. 89.
10. Brian Urquhart and Gary Sick (ed.), *The United Nations and the Iran-Iraq War*, New York, 1987, p. 14; Kenneth M. Pollack, *The Persian Puzzle: ..., op., cit.*, pp. 232-233.
11. Phebe Marr, *The Modern History of Iraq*, Westview Press, USA, 1985, p. 292.
12. Kenneth M. Pollack, *The Persian Puzzle: ..., op., cit.*, pp. 233-234.
13. *Op., cit.*, p. 234.
14. *Op., cit.*, p. 208.
15. *Op., cit.*, p. 182.
16. *New York Magazine*, November 10, 1980, p. 24.
17. Referring to the Paris-based *Le Monde* of October 8, 1980, Dilip Hiro has mentioned Iran's President Bani Sadr had learnt of Saddam Hussein's secret plans two months before the war began. Iran's President told Eric Rouleau of that news paper that a secret meeting had taken place in France among the Iranian counter-revolutionaries, the Iraqi representatives, Americans, and Israeli military experts. Dilip Hiro, *Iran Under the Ayatollahs, op., cit.*, p. 168.
18. Phebe Mar, *op., cit.*, p. 229; *New York Times*, July 17, 1980.
19. Barry Rubin, 'United States-Iraq Relations: A Spring Thaw?', in Tim Niblock (ed.), *Iraq: The Contemporary State*, Croom Helm, London, 1982, pp. 114-117.
20. Preface in Adam Tarock, *op., cit.*, pp. xi-xiii.
21. Iraq's Saddam Hussein made an unannounced visit to King Khalid (1975-1982) of Saudi Arabia at Taif on August 5, 1980. Saddam went there to consult with the King about his invasion plans. Bryan

- R. Gibson has claimed that the Saudi King Khalid gave his personal blessing to the invasion and promised him Saudi backing.
22. See: Shireen T. Hunter, *Iran's Foreign Policy in the Post-Soviet Era: ...*, *op., cit.*, p. 39.
  23. Sasan Fayazmanesh, *The United States and Iran: ...*, *op., cit.*, pp. 2, 27.
  24. Christin Marschall, *Iran's Persian Gulf Policy from Khomeini to Khatami*, *op., cit.*, p. 70.
  25. Kenneth M. Pollack, *The Persian Puzzle: ...*, *op., cit.*, p. 215.
  26. Khomeini described Carter as one of the three satanic figures confronting Iran, the other two being the Shah (who was by now dead on July 27, 1980) and Saddam Hussein.
  27. *New York Magazine*, December 8, 1986, Vol. 19, No. 48, p. 46. See also: Nikki R. Keddie and Rudolph P. Matthee (ed.), *Iran and the Surrounding World: Interactions in culture and cultural politics*, p. 367.
  28. *New York Magazine*, December 10, 1979, Vol. 12, No. 48, p. 55.
  29. *New York Magazine*, December 10, 1979, Vol. 12, No. 48, p. 55.
  30. Bryan R. Gibson, "Covert Relationship: American Foreign Policy, Intelligence, and the Iran-Iraq War, 1980-1988", Thesis, *op., cit.*, p. 23.
  31. Francis A. Boyle, 'International Crisis and Neutrality: United States Foreign Policy Toward the Iran-Iraq War', *Mercer Review*, Vol. 43, 1991-1992, p. 537; *New York Magazine*, December 10, 1979, *op., cit.*, p. 55.
  32. Francis A. Boyle, *op., cit.*, pp. 536-537. It is also reported that there were three coup attempts made by the Iranian dissidents led by the Shah-appointed ex-Prime Minister Shahpour Bakhtiar and the Shah's strong man General Oveisi. They both made frequent visits in Baghdad and Washington to throw out the Islamic regime in Tehran during the summer of 1980. The Islamic Republic of Iran accused that the US was behind these plots and being failed to materialize such plans.
  33. On January 23, 1980, President Carter announced: "Any attempt by any outside force to gain control of the Persian Gulf region will be regarded as an assault on the vital interests of the United States of America, and such an assault will be repelled by any means necessary, including military force."
  34. *New York Magazine*, November 10, 1980, p. 26; Barry Rubin, 'United States-Iraq Relations: A Spring Thaw?', *op., cit.*, p. 117; Stephen C. Pelletiere, *The Iran-Iraq War: ...*, *op., cit.*, p. 30.
  35. Steve A. Yetiv, *America and the Persian Gulf: The Third Party Dimension in World Politics*, Praeger, London, 1995, p. 134.
  36. Imam Khomeini, *Islam and Revolution*, *op., cit.*, pp. 276.
  37. Quds is the Arabic name for Jerusalem. Revolutionary Iran also has a special unit of Revolutionary Guard Corps by the name of Quds originally taken from the word "Al-Quds" and often used to refer to Jerusalem which incurred anger the US-Israeli allies.
  38. Trita Parsi, *Treacherous Alliance: ...*, *op., cit.*, pp. 83-93; Ray Takeyh, *Guardians of the Revolution: ...*, *op., cit.*, p. 62.
  39. Mohammad Ayoob (ed.), *The Middle East in World Politics*, *op., cit.*, p.132; Trita Parsi, *Treacherous Alliance: ...*, *op., cit.*, p. 82; Nikola B. Schahgaldian, *op., cit.*, p. 123.
  40. Cheryl A. Rubenberg, *op., cit.*, p. 1474; Anoushiravan Ehteshami, *After Khomeini: The Iranian Second Republic*, Routledge, London, 1995, pp. 129, 204; Mohammad Ayoob (ed.), *The Middle East in World Politics*, *op., cit.*, p.132.
  41. Iraq was strong anti-Israel since the latter's birth in 1948 and because of US support for this militant state in 1967 Arab-Israeli war, Baghdad severed its diplomatic relations with Washington. In February 1980, Saddam Hussein announced an Arab National Charter, a document that committed Iraq "waging an all-out war against Israel and to call upon all other Arab States to join in that war."
  42. John H. Sigler, 'The Iran-Iraq Conflict: The Tragedy of Limited Conventional War', *International Journal*, Vol. 41, No. 2, South-west Asia, Spring, 1986, pp. 448-452.
  43. The seizure of the Grand Mosque in Mecca (in November 1979), in Saudi Arabia, another strong US ally in the region appeared as the crucial threat to US.
  44. Steve A. Yetiv, *America and the Persian Gulf* *op., cit.*, p. 155; *New York Magazine*, December 10, 1979, *op., cit.*, p. 56; Hooshang Amirahmadi (ed.), *op., cit.*, p.59.
  45. *New York Magazine*, December 10, 1979, p. 58.
  46. It is pertinent to state that since the conclusion of the Camp David Accords in 1978, any nation that opposed it subsequently became an enemy country of both the US and Israel. For example, since 1979 Khomeini's Iran has been opposing Israel and resultantly, it has inimical relations with both Tel Aviv and Washington. While a month before the fall of democratically elected Egyptian President Mohammad Morsi on July 3, 2013, the Palestinian Islamist group HAMAS (*Harakat al-Muqawama al-Islamiyya*, which literally means "Islamic Resistance Movement"), whom the US considers a terrorist organization, on June 29, 2013, called Brotherhood leaders to revise the 1979 Camp David

- Accords. The Morsi government remained silent which Israel and the US meant tacit acceptance of HAMAS's request which caused huge anger of the Israeli-US allies and the power of their anger eventually overthrew the Morsi government within four days on July 3, 2013 by pro-US Egyptian army. On July 4, 2013, *The Times of Israel* headlined that "Officially silent, Israel privately upbeat over Morsi's ouster".
47. In an address to the Muslim world once Khomeini said: "We will export our revolution throughout the world ... until the calls "there is no god but God (Allah) and Muhammad (pbuh) is the messenger of God" are echoed all over the world.' Efraim, Karsh, *The Iran-Iraq War: 1980-1988*, Osprey Publishing, UK, 2002, p. 12; Kenneth M. Pollack, *The Persian Puzzle: ... , op., cit.*, p. 183.
  48. Fawaz A. Gerges, *America and Political Islam: ... , op., cit.*, p. 44.
  49. Iraq was Iran's first target while Tehran saw Bahrain as "100 percent ripe for an Islamic revolution" because of 65% and 70% Shi'a population living in those countries respectively. US strong ally Saudi Arabia also got concerned because at the time 500,000 Shi'a concentrated in the strategic oil-rich province of Hasa while UAE has small but significant pockets of Shi'a. Kenneth M. Pollack, *The Persian Puzzle: ... , op., cit.*, p. 198.
  50. Michael C. Hudson, 'To Play the Hegemon: Fifty Years of US Policy toward the Middle East', *The Middle East Journal*, Vol. 50, No. 3, Summer 1996, p. 333.
  51. Cheryl A. Rubenberg, 'US Policy toward Nicaragua and Iran and the Iran-Contra Affair: Reflections on Continuity of American Foreign Policy', *Third World Quarterly*, Vol. 10, No. 4, October, 1988, p. 1477.
  52. Shireen T. Hunter, *Iran and the World: Continuity in a Revolutionary Decade*, Indiana University Press, USA, 1990, pp. 59-60.
  53. Jimmy Carter, *Keeping Faith: ... , op., cit.* p. 441.
  54. David Patrick Houghton, *US Foreign Policy and the Iran Hostage Crisis, op., cit.*, p. 2.
  55. Rose McDermott, *Risk-Taking in International Politics: ... , op., cit.*, p. 48.
  56. David Patrick Houghton, *op., cit.*, p. 175.
  57. Quoted in Brzezinski, *Power and Principle, op., cit.*, p. 482-484. See also, Gary Sick, *All Fall Down: ... , op., cit.*, p. 206.
  58. Imam Khomeini, *Islam and Revolution, op., cit.*, pp. 301-305.
  59. Khomeini depicted Iraq as the "US agent in the region" and pithily described Saddam Hussein as the wretched servant of the US and appealed to Iraqis to overthrow the 'non-Muslim' Baathist regime. In response, Saddam Hussein viewed him as a "turbaned Shah" and 'a Persian magician'.
  60. See: Efraim, Karsh, *The Iran-Iraq War: 1980-1988, op., cit.*, pp. 19, 44; Nikola B. Schahgaldian (with the assistance of Gina Barkhordarian), "The Iranian Military Under the Islamic Republic", Prepared for the Office of the Under Secretary of Defense for Policy Published by The RAND Corporation, March 1987, pp. 19-20; Stephen C. Pelletiere, *The Iran-Iraq War: ... , op., cit.*, pp. 14-35.
  61. Frederick William Engdahl, *A Century of War: ... , op., cit.*, p. 213.
  62. Noam Chomsky, *Failed States: The Abuse of Power and the Assault on Democracy*, Metropolitan Books, New York, 2006, p. 144; Dilip Hiro, *Iran under the Ayatollahs, op., cit.*, p. 169; G. Hossein Razi, 'An Alternative Paradigm to State Rationality in Foreign Policy: Iran-Iraq War', *op., cit.*, pp. 713; Edgar O'ballance, 'The Iraqi-Iranian War: The First Round', *Parameters, Journal of the US Army War College*, Vol. XI, No. 1, March, 1981, p. 56.
  63. *The New York Times*, September 24, 1980; Sasan Fayazmanesh, *The United States and Iran: ... , op., cit.*, p. 24.
  64. Kenneth M. Pollack, *The Persian Puzzle: ... , op., cit.*, p. 206.
  65. Francis A. Boyle, 'International Crisis and Neutrality: ...', *op., cit.*, pp. 536-537.
  66. William O. Beeman, *The "Great Satan" VS. The "Mad Mullahs": ... , op., cit.*, p. 131.
  67. Stephen Kinzer, *All the Shah's Men: ... , op., cit.*, p. 179.
  68. The US 'tilting' toward Iraq was such that US assistance for Iraq would be enough that Iraq would not be defeated by Iran while US tilting toward Iran was to prevent absolute Iraqi victory over Iran.
  69. Dilip Hiro, *Iran under the Ayatollahs, op., cit.*, p. 168.
  70. *Op., cit.*, p. 322.
  71. Reportedly, the US also provided the Iranian military with arms via Israel in the hope that it would overthrow a civilian government at a time when the country was under a foreign military attack. *New York Magazine*, November 10, 1980, p. 26; Shireen T. Hunter, *Iran's Foreign Policy in the Post-Soviet Era: ... , op., cit.*, p. 40; Sasan Fayazmanesh, *The United States and Iran: ... , op., cit.*, p. 2.
  72. Cameron R. Hume, *The United Nations, Iran and Iraq: How Peacemaking Changed*, Indiana University Press, USA, 1994, P. 57.



73. Nikki R. Keddie, 'The Iranian Revolution and the U.S. Policy,' *op. cit.*, p. 23.; Gary Sick, *All Fall Down: ...*, *op. cit.*, pp. xxviii-xxix.
74. John D. Stempel, *Inside the Iranian Revolution*, *op. cit.*, p. 261.
75. Ilan Berman, *Tehran Rising: Iran's Challenge to the United States*, Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, Inc., USA, 2007, pp. xviii-xix.
76. *The New York Times*, December 8, 1991; Farhang Jahanpour, 'The Roots of the Hostage Crisis', *The World Today*, Vol. 48, No. 2, February 1992, pp. 33-34. Reportedly, with Washington's approval Israel sold over \$500 million worth of arms to Iran in the 1980-1983 period, while the CIA mentioned the amount was approximately \$300 million.
77. J. C. Hurewitz, 'The Middle East: A Year of Turmoil', *Foreign Affairs*, Vol. 59, No. 3, 1980, p. 560.
78. As a result, by May 1983, Iran pushed Iraq out and advanced into enemy territory with the slogans "War, War Until Victory" and "The Road to Jerusalem Goes Through Baghdad." See: Ervand Abrahamian, *A History of Modern Iran*, *op. cit.*, p. 171; Nikki R. Keddie and Rudolph P. Matthee (ed.), *Iran and the Surrounding World: ...*, *op. cit.*, p. 360; Gary Sick, *All Fall Down: ...*, *op. cit.*, p. xxii; Kenneth M. Pollack, *The Persian Puzzle: ...*, *op. cit.*, pp. 193-194.
79. Michael Sterner, 'The Iran-Iraq War', *Foreign Affairs*, Vol. 63, No. 1, Fall, 1984, p. 129.
80. Bryan Gibson, *Covert Relationship: American Foreign Policy, Intelligence, and the Iran-Iraq War, 1980-1988*, Dissertation, August 21, 2007, p. 89; James G. Blight et al., *Becoming Enemies: U.S.-Iran Relations and the Iran-Iraq War, 1979-1988*, Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, Inc., USA, 2012, pp. 77, 270; James A. Bill, *The Eagle and the Lion: ...*, *op. cit.*, pp. 304-306.
81. Francis A. Boyle, *op. cit.*, p. 538.; Claudia Wright, 'Religion and Strategy in the Iraq-Iran War', *Third World Quarterly*, Vol. 7, No. 4, October 1985, pp. 849-850.
82. Kenneth M. Pollack, *The Persian Puzzle: ...*, *op. cit.*, pp. 207-208.
83. David Barsamian et. al., *Targeting Iran*, *op. cit.*, p. 33.
84. Efraim Karsh, *The Iran-Iraq War: 1980-1988*, *op. cit.*, p.44.
85. WM.J. Olson, 'The Gulf War: Peace in Our Times?', *Parameter*, Winter, 1986, Vol. XVI, No. 4, pp. 52-53.
86. The "Operation Staunch" was aimed at Iran to limit its ability to buy weapons which entailed vigorous diplomatic efforts through intelligence-sharing and strong demarches to block or complicate Iran's arms resupply efforts on a worldwide basis, and to force Iran to accept UNSC Resolution 540 but specifically to prevent Iran from winning the war against Iraq since the US viewed that Iran's victory would endanger its interests in the region.
87. Bryan R. Gibson, *op. cit.*, p. 77.
88. Hizbullah, now a political party in Lebanon, founded after the Israeli invasion of Lebanon in 1982, specifically to fight Israeli occupation of a sizable strip of South Lebanon. When the Iran-Iraq War was in progress, on June 6, 1982, Israel invaded Lebanon in the name of "Operation Peace for Galilee" and occupied Lebanon with a view to materializing Israel's defense minister Ariel Sharon's plan to wipe out the PLO from Lebanon and to create a new government in Beirut dominated by its allies in the Maronite Christian community. Initially Iran remained unmoved because of ongoing Iran-Iraq War and the reported Iran-Israeli cooperation during the early years of the war. However, Iran's stance changed only when forces of Israel, the "Little Satan" as the instrument of the "Great Satan" (US) raped, maimed and killed close to 20,000 and displaced 450,000 Lebanese at Sabra and Shatila refugee camps in cold blood as they are doing today in Palestine. Under such plight, Iranian help was sought by Lebanese Shia who later became Hizbullah. Over time Iran-backed Hizbullah became one of the enemy organizations of US and its ally Israel and Iran's support for Hizbullah has become since an object of contention between Iran and the US. The US designated as terrorist organization on August 10, 1997.
89. Bryan R. Gibson, *op. cit.*, p. 110; Dilip Hiro, *Iran under the Ayatollahs*, *op. cit.*, p. 233.
90. 'State Sponsors of Terrorism', U.S. Department of State, available at: <http://www.state.gov/j/ct/list/c14151.htm> ; Bruce W. Jentleson & Thamas G. Paterson (ed.), *Encyclopedia of U.S. Foreign Relations*, Vol. 2, Oxford University Press, New York, 1997, p. 419; Mansour Farhang 'The Iran-Iraq War, The Feud, The tragedy, The spoils', *op. cit.*, p. 671.
91. WM. J. Oslon, *op. cit.*, p. 52.
92. Francis A. Boyle, *op. cit.*, pp. 541-556; Dilip Hiro, *Iran under the Ayatollahs*, *op. cit.*, p. 235.
93. Barbara Slavín, *Bitter Friends, Bosom Enemies: ...*, *op. cit.*, p. 18.
94. William O. Beeman, *The "Great Satan" VS. The "Mad Mullahs": ...*, *op. cit.*, p. 131; Bryan Gibson, *Covert Relationship: ...*, *op. cit.*, p. 117.
95. Trita Parsi, *Treacherous Alliance: ...*, *op. cit.*, p. 113; Adam Tarock, *The Superpowers' involvement in the Iran-Iraq War*, *op. cit.*, p. xii.

96. When a Lebanese weekly magazine named *al-Shira'a* revealed the whole affair on November 3, 1986, it became known in history as the Iran-Contra Affairs or the so-called "Arms for Hostages" controversy. The episode is also known in different names: Iran-Contra scandal, Iran-gate, Iran Fiasco, Iran gambit, Iragua, Iranscam etc.
97. Shireen T. Hunter, *Iran's Foreign Policy in the Post-Soviet Era: ... , op., cit.,* p. 42.
98. Nathan Thrall, 'How the Reagan administration taught Iran the wrong lessons', *Middle East Review of International Affairs*, Vol. 11, No. 2, June 2007, pp. 16-18; Trita Parsi, *Treacherous Alliance: ... , op., cit.,* p. 115; Robert Owen Freedman, *The Middle East from the Iran-Contra Affair to the Intifada*, Syracuse University Press, New York, 1991, p. 173.
99. Theodore Draper, *A Very Thin Line: the Iran-Contra Affairs*, Hill and Wang Publishers, New York, USA, 1991, p. 199; See also: Johnathan Marshall, Peter Dale Scott, Ges Jane Hunter, *Irangate: The Israel Connection*, South End Press, 1987; Roger East (ed.), *Keesing's Contemporary Archives—Record of World Events, July- 1986*, vol. 32, Longman Group Limited, London, p. 34515.
100. James A. Bill, *The Eagle and the Lion: ... , op., cit.,* pp. 307-313.
101. See: Graham E. Fuller, *The "Center of the Universe": The Geopolitics of Iran*, Westview Press, USA, 1991, p. 256.
102. *New York Magazine*, December 8, 1986, Vol. 19, No. 48, p. 48; Gary Sick, 'Iran's Quest for Superpower Status', *op., cit.,* pp. 710-711; Kenneth M. Pollack, *The Persian Puzzle: ... , op., cit.,* p. 221.
103. Trita Parsi, *Treacherous Alliance: ... , op., cit.,* p. 114; George C. Herring, *From Colony to Superpower: U.S. Foreign Relations since 1776*, Oxford University Press, New York, 2008, p. 878.
104. Christin Marschall, *op., cit.,* pp. 85-86; James A. Bill, *The Eagle and the Lion: ... , op., cit.,* pp. 309-313; Robert Owen Freedman, *op., cit.,* p.79.
105. Noam Chomsky, *Failed States: ... , op., cit.,* p. 5. *New York Magazine*, December 8, 1986, Vol. 19, No. 48, p. 44; Robert Parry and Peter Kornbluh, 'Iran-Contra's Untold Story', *Foreign Policy*, No. 72, Autumn, 1988, p. 5 ; Cheryl A. Rubenberg, *op., cit.,* pp. 1474-1501.
106. *Bulletin of the Atomic Scientists*, June 1987, Vol. 43, No. 5, p. 42; Kenneth M. Pollack, *The Persian Puzzle: ... , op., cit.,* pp. 213-217; Cameron R. Hume, *op., cit.,* p. 85.
107. James A. Bill, *The Eagle and the Lion: ... , op., cit.,* p. 302.
108. *Op., cit.,* p. 413.
109. James M. McCormick, *op., cit.,* p. 141.
110. Amiya Rao, "All the President's Men", *Economic and Political Weekly*, Vol. 22, No. 38, September 19, 1987, p. 1504.
111. Christin Marschall, *op., cit.,* p. 183; Hooshang Amirahmadi (ed.), *op., cit.,* p. 13.
112. Sasan Fayazmanesh, *The United States and Iran: ... , op., cit.,* p.59.
113. John H. Sigler, 'The Iran-Iraq Conflict: The Tragedy of Limited Conventional War', *op., cit.,* p. 452; Cited from Robert C. Johansen and Michael G. Renner, *Los Angeles Times*, February 16, 1986.
114. *New York Times*, May, 22, 1984; Mansour Farhang 'The Iran-Iraq War, The Feud, The tragedy, The spoils', *op., cit.,* p. 671.
115. Joseph J. St. Marie and Shadad Naghshpour, *Revolutionary Iran and the United States: ... , op., cit.,* p. 147; Simon Chapman (ed.), *The Middle East and North Africa*, Regional Surveys of the world, Europa publications, London, 2001, p. 573.
116. Trita Parsi, *Treacherous Alliance: ... , op., cit.,* p. 112; *The New York Times*, December 8, 1991.
117. Christin Marschall, *op., cit.,* p. 183; Shireen T. Hunter, *Iran's Foreign Policy in the Post-Soviet Era: ... , op., cit.,* pp. 42-43.
118. For more about Iran-US military confrontation see: Eric Hooglund, 'Reagan's Iran: Factions behind US Policy in the Gulf', *Middle East Report*, No. 151, March-April, 1988, p. 29; Robert Owen Freedman, *The Middle East from the Iran-Contra Affair to the Intifada*, *op., cit.,* pp. 171-173; Efraim Karsh, *The Iran-Iraq War: ... , op., cit.,* pp. 58-59; James A. Bill, *The Lion and the Eagle*, *op., cit.,* p. 307.
119. This time around, Iran-US relations further worsened over another issue outside the war front when on July 31, 1987, an anti-US demonstration of the Iranian pilgrims of Makkah turned into violent which led the Saudi security forces to resort strong measure that resulted in the death of 402 demonstrating Iranian pilgrims at annual Hajj in Makkah. Iranian leaders condemned that the incident was orchestrated by the US.
120. *Op., cit.,* p. 184; Sasan Fayazmanesh, 'Historical Amnesia: The shoot down of Iran air flight 655', *Counterpunch*, July 11-13, 2008, <http://www.unz.org/Pub/CounterpunchWeb-2008jul-00095>

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121. Joseph J. St. Marie and Shadad Naghshpour, *Revolutionary Iran and the United States: ...*, *op. cit.*, pp. 147-148.
122. Quoted in William O. Beeman, *The "Great Satan" VS. The "Mad Mullahs": ...*, *op. cit.*, p. 132.
123. Reese Erlich, *The Iran Agenda: The Real Story of U.S. Policy and the Middle East Crisis*, PoliPointPress, USA, 2007, p. 68.
124. William O. Beeman, *The "Great Satan" VS. The "Mad Mullahs": ...*, *op. cit.*, p. 132.
125. Reese Erlich, *The Iran Agenda: ...*, *op. cit.*, p. 69.
126. Spencer C. Tucker (ed.), *The encyclopedia of Middle East Wars: The United States in the Persian Gulf Afghanistan, and Iraq Conflicts*, (vol. II: E-L), ABC-CLIO, California, USA, 2010, p. 576.
127. Emily Johns, *Drawing Paradise on the 'Axis of Evil'*, A JNV (Justice Not Vengeance) Exhibition Catalogue with essays by Milan Rai, p. 13, available at: [www.j-n-v.org](http://www.j-n-v.org)
128. George C. Herring, *From Colony to Superpower: ...*, *op. cit.*, p. 880; Raymond Hinnebusch and Anoushiravan Ehteshami (ed.), *The Foreign Policies of the Middle East States*, Lynne Rienner Publishers, Inc., USA, 2002, p. 299.
129. John W. Garver, *China and Iran: Ancient Partners in a post-imperial world*, University of Washington Press, 2006, p. 69.
130. Ray Takeyh, *Guardians of the Revolution: ...*, *op. cit.*, p. 56.
131. Lawrence G. Potter and Gary G. Sick (ed.), *Iran, Iraq and the Legacies of War*, *op. cit.*, p. 159.
132. James G. Blight et al., *op. cit.*, p. 77. See also: Shireen T. Hunter, *Iran's Foreign Policy in the Post-Soviet Era: ...*, *op. cit.*, p. 41.
133. Shireen T. Hunter, *Iran's Foreign Policy in the Post-Soviet Era: ...*, *op. cit.*, p. 44.
134. Gary Sick, 'Iran's Quest for Superpower Status', *op. cit.*, p. 714.
135. Kenneth M. Pollack, *The Persian Puzzle: ...*, *op. cit.*, p. 239.
136. Shireen T. Hunter, *Iran's Foreign Policy in the post-Soviet Era: ...*, *op. cit.*, pp. 44-46. See also, Kenneth M. Pollack, *The Persian Puzzle: ...*, *op. cit.*, pp. 237-238.
137. Shireen T. Hunter, 'Post-Khomeini Iran', *op. cit.*, p. 146.
138. In September 1988, an Indian-born British Muslim author by the name of Salman Rushdie published a novel entitled *The Satanic Verses*. The novel presented a portrait of Islam and the Prophet Mohammad (pbuh) in a postmodern satirical style. It is reported that basically with literary and mercenary ambitions, Rushdie wrote the novel in a scornful fashion to parody Islam for which he was believed to be paid advance royalties of over US \$800,000. Immediately on publication of the novel, strong protests followed in Pakistan, Saudi Arabia, Egypt, Somalia, Bangladesh, Sudan, Malaysia, Indonesia and Qatar and even India and Great Britain. An exceptionally fierce reaction came from the Islamic Republic of Iran when on February 14, 1989, the Supreme Leader Ayatullah Imam Khomeini, in a fatwa—a ruling of Islamic jurisprudence—passed death sentence on the author of the novel, Salman Rushdie. For more see: Ali A. Mazrui, 'The Satanic Verses or a Satanic Novel? Moral Dilemmas of the Rushdie Affair', *Alternatives: Global, Local, Political*, Vol. 15, No. 1, Winter 1990, p. 119.
139. Kenneth M. Pollack, *The Persian Puzzle: ...*, *op. cit.*, pp. 239-240.
140. Baqer Moin, *Khomeini: ...*, *op. cit.*, p. 303.

# **Chapter 5**

## **Iran-US Relations Since 1989**

As analysed in the previous chapter, the Iran-Iraq War left a strong negative legacy on the Iran-US relations. Additionally, Ayatullah Imam Khomeini, who survived the war, was critical to the US before he died in June 1989. However, in the post-Khomeini era many events: domestic, regional and international have been affecting the prevailing Iran-US relations and thus creating new directions and adding new dimensions to Iran-US relations. The purpose of this chapter is to highlight the need for a better understanding of Iran-US political relations of the post-Khomeini era. Therefore, the chapter critically analyzes the different aspects and dimensions of Iran-US relations from 1989 to the present time in the context of domestic, regional and international issues like hostage issue in Lebanon, the 1991 Gulf War and the regional security arrangements, the post-Cold War, the US dual containment policy, President Khatami's Dialogue of Civilizations, Bush's "Axis of Evil" speech, Khatami's "grand bargain" offer to US, US wars in Afghanistan and Iraq, Iran's nuclear programme and the US position on it and many more. The chapter contains following three sections.

**Section I Iran-US Relations under President Rafsanjani (1989-1997): New Trend in Action**

**Section II Iran-US Relations during the Khatami Era (1997-2005): Hopes for Rapprochement**

**Section III Iran-US Relations Since 2005**

## **Section I**

### **Iran-US Relations under President Rafsanjani (1989-1997): New Trend in Action**

Iran-US relations of this period of time are important for a couple of reasons. Firstly, following the demise of Ayatullah Imam Khomeini, new pragmatic political leaders came to run Iran who were seemed open to the Iranian reconciliation with the US. Secondly, the government of George Bush (1989-1992) in the US, who was considered less hardliner, also raised the hope of Iran-US reconciliation. Thirdly, there was a change in regional order following the end of the Cold War and disintegration of the Soviet Union and the after the end of the 1991 Gulf War which also affected the ongoing Iran-US relations tremendously. These all are reviewed under several sub-headings one after another.

#### **(a) New Leaderships in Tehran and Washington Raised Hope of Iran-US Reconciliation**

Ayatullah Imam Khomeini who scornfully branded the US—the Great Satan, died on June 3, 1989. Following Khomeini’s death, Ayatullah Ali Khamenei (1939- ) was elevated to the position of the Supreme Leader on June 5, 1989, while pragmatist Ali Akbar Hashemi Rafsanjani (1934-2017) was elected as the President of the Islamic Republic of Iran in August 1989. The government of President Rafsanjani had to face the immediate legacy of the Iran-Iraq War left military reconstruction and rearmament as the main priority along with economic reconstruction with \$6 billion foreign debt. Under the circumstance, his government initiated First Five-Year Development Plan for the 1989-1994 period which stressed the need to build a state able to resist domestic and international challenges and act as the political fulcrum for the advancement of the Islamic Revolution’s ultimate objectives.<sup>1</sup> In this respect, he was supported by some Iranian moderates who advocated for improving Iran’s ties with the Western nations including the US.<sup>2</sup> Therefore, the main focus of President Rafsanjani’s foreign policy was to improve Iran’s stance in the international community and restore a workable relationship with the US. Once Rafsanjani said: “If people believe we can live behind a closed door, they are mistaken. While we must be reasonably independent, we are in need of friends and allies around the world.”<sup>3</sup> In this way, Rafsanjani focused on diplomacy that could help reach out the world community, the US in particular to break Iran’s isolation. He tactically avoided using political rhetoric—the “Great Satan” for America. While the Iranian Ambassador at the UN first came with a statement which read: “We can see no problems with establishing relations [with America] if such relations were based on reciprocal respect.”<sup>4</sup> Meanwhile, the year when Rafsanjani became Iran’s fourth President in August 1989, the US had also a new President, George Bush (1989-1992). President Bush was considered less hardliner than his predecessor President Ronald Reagan under whom the Islamic Republic of Iran gained the ignominious title ‘state sponsoring terrorism’ and

experienced a strict arms embargo—Operation Staunch during the Iran-Iraq War and thus experienced a kind of isolation from the international community. These new developments raised high hopes for change in the relationship between Iran and the US and created expectations that a decade of Iran-US animosity would now come to an end.<sup>5</sup>

**(b) The Hostage Issue of Lebanon**

However, Iran's growing involvement in Lebanon broadened its revolutionary challenge to the US and this development intensified ongoing hostility between Iran and the US because both countries pursued the conflict unimpeded by supporting their respective allies in Lebanon: Iran supported the Hizbullah and the US supported Israel. As a result, the new trend in Iran-US relations that emerged after Khomeini's death was facing problem because of new developments in Lebanon. On July 28, 1989, a Hizbullah leader by the name of Sheikh Abdul Karim Obeid had been abducted by Israeli forces in Lebanon. Hizbullah reacted quickly and threatened to kill Colonel William Higgins, who had been held captive since February 1988, if Obeid was not freed. When Israel refused to release Obeid Colonel Higgins was killed. Around this time, Hizbullah also took more Western citizens as hostages. The US and some European countries had claimed that there was evidence of Iran's support, if not outright involvement or order. Despite this accusation, both US and Iranian Presidents behaved cautiously and an indirect and unacknowledged dialogue had begun between Iran and the US. Reportedly, President Bush expressed a desire to normalize Washington's relations with Tehran mainly in the "hope of Iranian help in releasing Western hostages in the Lebanon."<sup>6</sup> Simultaneously, Washington warned Tehran that it would hold Iran responsible if "any additional hostages were harmed or put to death" after the execution of Colonel Higgins. Washington also made it clear that the US government would, if necessary, use military force against Iran.<sup>7</sup> Under the circumstance and to win US good impression, Iranian moderates tried heart and soul to help freeing Western hostages in Lebanon. Encouraged by President Bush's promise of "Goodwill begets goodwill," Rafsanjani continued his efforts for an opening to the US through new channels including the offices of the UN Secretary General and Under Secretary General Giandomenico Picco while his efforts to negotiate in the release of the hostages continued. The US acknowledged signs of positive Iranian behavior and admitted that it had no reason to believe that Iran was not serious in trying to spare another hostage—Joseph Cicipio.<sup>8</sup> Although the hostage issue came to a relatively satisfactory end, however, neither Iran was rewarded nor Washington's early promise of "goodwill begets goodwill" was materialized.<sup>9</sup>

**(c) The 1991 Gulf War**

After the hostage issue another important event that impacted Iran-US relations was the 1991 Gulf War. This is an axiomatic truth that the US helped Iraq in long eight years war with Iran. After the war ended in 1988, the US found Iraq uncompromising which is viewed very

alarming chiefly due to Saddam's anti-Israeli stance. After having been failed to get Iraq compromising even after using "carrot and stick" strategy under the "Constructive Engagement" policy, the US employed "Conspiracy Theory" and enticed Iraq to invade Kuwait by previously informing through its Ambassador April Catherine Glaspie (who met with Saddam Hussein on July 25, 1990 only a week before Iraqi invasion began) that any dispute between Iraq and Kuwait was not a matter of US concern.<sup>10</sup> Against this backdrop, Iraq occupied Kuwait on August 2, 1990. Now Washington changed its face overnight and influenced UNSC to adopt resolution 660 on August 2, 1990, which condemned the invasion and demanded Iraq withdraw immediately and unconditionally to positions as they were on 1 August 1990. Then the US got the needed instrument to contain Iraq and began military build-up in the name of Operation Desert Shield from August 7, 1990 for starting a war against Saddam Hussein. It dispatched air and additional naval forces to Saudi Arabia and the Persian Gulf and by mid-January 1991, the US-led multinational coalition had deployed over 150 ships and 2,000 aircrafts while the number of American troops reached over 500,000.

Iran was the first Gulf country to condemn the Iraqi invasion and the subsequent occupation of Kuwait.<sup>11</sup> Tehran called for the immediate and unconditional withdrawal of Iraqi troops and finally supported the UN Resolution 660. At the same time, Iran rejected any form of resorting to force as a solution to the crisis and therefore, denounced the presence of the US troops in the region. Tehran suddenly became a stage for diplomatic visits from Syria, Oman and the Kuwaiti government in exile. Noticing that Iran was gaining from its position through diplomacy, the US approached Tehran through Turkey and Switzerland to get support for the allied position. The US tried to allure Iran by offering help obtain Iranian government World Bank and IMF funding for the reconstruction of Iran. In September 1990 it was announced that the US was to return part of the Iranian assets frozen at the time of the 1979 Islamic Revolution. The US even set up a channel in 1990 because Washington recognized that it needed to communicate with Iran to avoid potential misunderstandings during the coming war with Iraq. Tim Guldemann, the Swiss Ambassador to Iran served as a go-between when the two countries needed to communicate.<sup>12</sup>

However, the US was not willing to offer Iran any incentives, unless and until it joined the anti-Iraq coalition.<sup>13</sup> The twist of the problem was that while Iran was pursuing a diplomatic solution to bring about an end to the crisis, the US was moving fast for a war with Iraq. When the war finally started on January 17, 1991, Iran emphasized its neutrality and declared its commitment to Iraq's territorial integrity. Analysts and scholars are fully agreed that Iran's neutrality was tilted in favour of the US-led coalition. For example, behind the scenes, Iran communicated with the US to avoid any misunderstandings, permitted the US Air Force to use Iranian airspace, and denied Iraqi requests for support. What is more, when by the end of January 1991, Iraq sent

about 100 aircrafts to Iran without informing the Tehran authority in order to save them from allied attack, Iran did not return them and kept them as part of its 1980-1988 war reparations. These Iranian actions were of great assistance to the US in the 1991 Gulf War and they won Iran praise from US Secretary of State James Baker.<sup>14</sup> Therefore, Iran's leaders were hopeful of US positive gestures as the war ended. Oddly enough, Iranian critical assistance to the US during the 1991 Gulf War failed to produce significant results in the end. What is more, when Iraq's defeat in the 1991 Gulf War left a power vacuum in the region for Iran to dominate, the US and its close ally Israel were not in a position to accept it. That is why, the US did not go to remove Saddam Hussein from power although it had every opportunity to do so. The US calculation was that Saddam's removal from power would only enhance Iran's image and power in the region, and Iran might appear powerful and a Shi'i regime of Tehran might take over in Baghdad or the Shia of Iraq would naturally align with Iran. Israel which had been a major supporter of balancing Iran with Iraq, played an important role in convincing US in this regard.<sup>15</sup> It was because of the active opposition of the US-Israeli allies, Iran failed to be integrated into the post-Gulf War security arrangement of the Persian Gulf.<sup>16</sup> This time the US diplomacy preferred to keep Iran out of future security arrangements in the Persian Gulf and to convince the Gulf states that Iran was a threat, the US even resorted to negative propaganda against Iran which created major problems for Iran and made an uneasy state in Iran-US relations.<sup>17</sup>

**(d) The US Military Presence in the Persian Gulf**

The increasing US military presence in the Persian Gulf before and after the 1991 Gulf War and during the post-1991 Gulf war security arrangements impacted the Iran-US relations tremendously. Retrospectively, During the Iran-Iraq War of 1980-1988, the military presence of the US had progressively increased in the region (a process that had started under President Carter) as a means of securing its allies and ensuring the unrestricted supply of oil. By August 1989, the US Navy had 14 warships in the Persian Gulf and an unspecified number of other warships in the Arabian Sea. While following the Iraqi occupation of Kuwait, the US, at Saudi request, sent over 500,000 to Saudi Arabia. Following the 1991 Gulf War, the US became a major power in the Persian Gulf, a new development in the history of the region and the US was now inside Iran's sphere of influence with forces that could easily topple the regime in Tehran. Given the hostile state of Tehran-Washington relations, the increased US military presence in the Persian Gulf was understandably seen by Iran as a real threat to its national security but it had to act very cautiously. Hence, Iranian opposition to the US military build-up in the Persian Gulf was limited to rhetoric only.<sup>18</sup> Tehran also noticed alarmingly that after the 1991 Gulf War a series of bilateral defense pacts between the US and a number of GCC states were concluded<sup>19</sup> to effectively weaken and isolate Iran from the neighboring states that would force the country adopt a more accommodating foreign policy *vis-a-vis* the West and its allies in the Persian Gulf



in the post-Cold war world order. Iran now viewed the Gulf crisis of 1990-1991 as a US excuse to stay in the region. Iran felt seriously threatened by the security agreements signed between the US and Gulf states. Iran resolved that in this way, the US was creating the pretext for military or other action against Iran to overthrow the Islamic government.<sup>20</sup> In this context, Iran only told the Arabs that the American presence was not in their interest, however, US alliance with the Arab states in the Persian Gulf continued unabated and so did the US presence in the region.

**(e) The Post-Cold War Regional Settlement**

Historically, the collapse of the Soviet Union and the end of the Cold War in December 1991 fundamentally transformed the character of the international political system as well as interstate relations which hugely affected and to some degree, changed the prevailing courses of Iran-US relations. Needless to say, the disintegration of the Soviet Union—Washington’s sole Cold War rival—following the end of the Cold War, led to a fundamental shift of economic and military power in favor of the US, making it the most influential international player and the single most powerful country in the globe, commonly known as the unrivaled global hegemon.<sup>21</sup> As the global hegemon, the US has been acting to check the military ambitions of the Middle East nations, in particular—Iran, given the fact that “Iran displaced the Soviet Union as the American enemy number one in the region” in the wake of the end of the Cold War. Under the circumstance, the Bush administration (1989-1992) made it clear that it wanted to prevent Iran from gaining political and economic influence in the newly emerged Muslim states of Central Asia and the Caucasus.<sup>22</sup> This shows that the demise of the Soviet Union and the subsequent end of the Cold War in 1991 presented two opposing prospects (opportunity and challenges) to Iran and so did to Iran-US relations. Iran saw that the century-old threat from its former superpower neighbor was removed with the collapse of the Soviet Union. This actually completed the Islamic Republic of Iran’s rise as a regional hegemon extending its perception of regional security and economic cooperation to both the Persian Gulf and the newly emerged Muslim Republics also known as the Central Asian Republics. Thus the end of the Cold War upon the disintegration of the Soviet Union led to an enhanced Iranian role in the international arena which the US denounced outright and has been acting to repudiate Iran’s such role by all means at its disposal. The US also opted for the containment of Iranian influence in the newly-emerged Central Asian Republics and the Caucasus because it wanted to protect its interests (energy resource) in the region. These opposing perspectives in Tehran and Washington regarding Central Asia and beyond only resulted in a rivalry between Iran and the US and strained their already hostile relations.<sup>23</sup>

**(f) The So-called Arab-Israel Peace Process<sup>24</sup>**

The Israeli-Palestinian conflict and the so-called Arab-Israel peace talks in the early 1990s had hugely affected the Islamic Republic of Iran’s relationship with the US. As stated in chapter 4,

since 1979, revolutionary regime of Iran has an ideological attachment to the Palestinian cause that is normative and strategic. By the same token, from its inception in late 1987, HAMAS, a Palestinian Islamic organization, has been enjoying a certain degree of Iranian support. Iran also favored that HAMAS was to be incorporated into the Arab-Israeli negotiation process claiming that in the past the US-led negotiators reached an incomplete and unsatisfactory solution to the Palestinian problem. Thus Iran has been using the Palestinian cause openly as a weapon in its efforts to win support among the Muslims against the US policy in the Middle East. This is where US-Israeli allies were (and are) extremely unhappy with Tehran. The US-Israeli allies wanted in the past and want at present Iran cease to support HAMAS and other Palestinian Islamic groups and soften its rhetoric against Israel. But as the US remained hostile to Iran and opposed Iran's integration into regional arrangements since 1991, Iran found its logic to oppose the US-led so-called Middle East peace process in response which put Tehran-Washington relations on a collision course. For example, Iran opposed the Madrid conference held from October 30 to November 4, 1991 as it was not invited to the conference.<sup>25</sup> Iran was not invited to the Madrid conference as part of Washington's policy of limiting Iran's influence in the region. The way Iran was left out in the peace talks, even after its changing attitude during the 1991 Gulf War, appeared to be entirely humiliating for Tehran and it had nothing but to oppose the whole peace process by any means possible.<sup>26</sup>

Iran denounced the US-inspired peace initiatives and successfully influenced the Palestinian Islamic groups (HAMAS, Islamic Jihad etc.) not to participate in the Madrid peace conference. Iran also hosted an "International Conference to Support the Islamic Revolution of Palestine" on October 19-20, 1991 which was attended by over 400 delegates from 60 Muslim countries including Egypt and the representatives of HAMAS, the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine-General Command (PFLP-GC), and Hizbullah from Lebanon. It is true, most of Tehran's such opposing policy toward the US-initiated Arab-Israeli peace process came as reactions to Washington's policy of not integrating Iran into the regional playmakers in the post-Gulf War of 1991; however, it invited violent reactions from the US-Israeli allies and ultimately made Iran enemy in the eyes of the US government. Israel quickly seized the opportunity to demonize Iran and since then anti-Iranian propaganda has been poisoning prevailing Iran-US relations. Israeli leadership knew quite well that any deterioration in relations between Tehran and Washington would only work to the benefit of Israel. Mindful of this fact and also learning that without the representation of Palestinian Islamist groups, the conference would be fruitless, Israeli Prime Minister Yitzhak Shamir was reluctant to attend the conference. Later on Washington made no secret and held Shamir's government largely responsible for the failure of the Madrid peace process.<sup>27</sup> However, Israel, its powerful lobby in the US—the American Israel

Public Affairs Committee (hereinafter AIPAC) and other pro-Israeli officials in Washington continued to blame Iran in the subsequent years for derailing the peace process.<sup>28</sup>

Consequently, the US-Israeli allies held Iran responsible for opposing the so-called Arab-Israeli peace process in the 1994-1995 period despite evidence to the contrary.<sup>29</sup> Convinced by Israel, in 1995 President Clinton (1993-2000) was seen to remark that off all the rogue states, Iran presented a particular problem to the peace process. While his anti-Iran Secretary of State Warren Christopher<sup>30</sup> said: “Iran is the primary patron of terrorists trying to derail the Arab-Israeli peace process.”<sup>31</sup> Later on, at a Dinner of the World Jewish Congress, President Clinton remarked: “Iran has broadened its role as an inspiration and paymaster to terrorists.” While in May 1995, addressing the AIPAC—the strongest Israeli lobby group in the US which was founded in 1953, Clinton stated that Iran “seeks to undermine the West and its values by supporting the murderous attacks of the Islamic Jihad and Hizbullah and other terrorist groups.”<sup>32</sup> In this charged context, Clinton declared “war on terrorism” around the world, particularly on some Middle Eastern “rogue states who sponsor death in order to kill peace” clearly indicating the war against Iran.

**(g) The US Dual Containment Policy**

Another major issue that contributed a lot to the continuation of hostile relationship between Iran and the US in the post-Khomeini era was the extension of US government’s unstated old containment policy of Iran in the form of stated ‘dual containment’ policy in 1993, aimed at containing Iran along with Iraq who were still regional powers in the Persian Gulf region. Fawaz A. Gerges has noted that although Iran-US relations were poor in 1979, they reached their nadir under the Clinton administration which “waged an undeclared economic, political, and covert war against Iran’s cleric-dominated regime.”<sup>33</sup> In fact, the Clinton administration’s discourse on Iran was exceptionally hostile which turned into the US policy of ‘blanket hostility’ and finally “the 1990s witnessed some of the most acute confrontations between the United States, Israel, and Iran”.<sup>34</sup> It was under the circumstance and under Israeli influence that the US government first developed a new terminology, “terrorist”, “rogue”, “renegade” “backlash” or “outlaw”, to describe the Islamic Republic of Iran along with other states (such as North Korea, Iraq, Libya, and Syria) that stubbornly refused to abide by Washington’s dictates and then adopted dual containment policy in 1993. In this regard, anti-Islamic and anti-Iran scholars like Daniel Pipes, Patrick Clawson, Harvard University Professor Samuel P. Huntington, Amos Perlmutter, and Krauthammer also influenced much to US adoption of anti-Iran policy which paved the way for the adoption of containment policy toward Iran. They began a concerted move to compare Iran’s threat to the US interests in the Persian Gulf with the Soviet threat to the US interests world-wide prior to 1991.<sup>35</sup>

Edward W. Said has made a clear point that with the breakup of the Soviet Union and thus with the end of the Cold War in 1991 Iran, and along with it Islam has come to represent US major foreign devil. Under the circumstance, the US fear was that while Iraq was struggling to recover from the 1991 Gulf War, Iran was determined to regain its former stature as the pre-eminent power in the Persian Gulf which by then had turned into “an American lake”.<sup>36</sup> This plus anti-Iranian Israeli propaganda led the US Congress to pass the Iran-Iraq Arms Non-Proliferation Act in October 1992 (which became law in October 1993). The Iran-Iraq Arms Non-Proliferation Act specifically placed restrictions on entities trading in advanced conventional weapons of a type or size that would have a destabilizing impact on the region. It also prohibited the trade in technology that could assist Iran’s unconventional weapons programme.<sup>37</sup> At about the same time, the US government brought some allegations against Iran such as, Iran had connections with Sudan, it was trying to fish in the troubled waters across the Arab world in an effort to dominate the Persian Gulf by military means, it had a very bad record of abusing of the human rights of its people, it was supporting international terrorism, it opposed the peace process in the Middle East by supporting regional participants (namely HAMAS and Islamic Jihad of Palestine) in the Arab-Israeli peace process, it attempted to export revolutionary ideology to other Muslim countries and finally it constantly pursued for weapons of mass destruction and determined to rearm and worse, to achieve nuclear capability-in short, to pose a threat to Western interests in the Middle East.<sup>38</sup>

These allegations were placed against Iran only to justify the initiation of a containment policy in the name of ‘dual containment’ policy “to isolate and defeat religious and nationalist extremists” of Iran and Iraq and to encourage regime change there. Thus, in essence, Clinton’s dual containment strategy was a policy continuation towards both Iran and Iraq from the previous Bush administration, which was, in fact, set up during the early 1980s under the Carter-Reagan administrations. Congressional Research Staffer Kenneth Katzman in his work *Search For Stable Peace in the Persian Gulf* has reviewed the US policy of dual containment and argued that the policy was temporary useful, because it was shift from past US policy of alternately promoting Iran or Iraq as US surrogates in the Gulf.<sup>39</sup> By adopting dual containment policy the US actually tried to make sure its own hegemonic position and oppose the hegemony by both Iran and Iraq in the Persian Gulf. Although both Iran and Iraq were targeted in the dual containment policy, in practice, the policy focused mainly on Iran (since Iraq was weakened through the 1991 Gulf war). As part of this dual containment policy, the US also limited Iran’s influence in the Central Asia and the Caucasus. To prevent Iran from interacting with newly emerged Central Asian Muslim states and Afghanistan the Clinton administration even encouraged the emergence of the Taliban in Afghanistan or at least acquiesced when Pakistan helped create it.<sup>40</sup> Thus the US adoption of dual containment policy engulfed the existing Iran-US relations extensively.

### (h) Iranian Gestures to Improve Tehran-Washington Relations

Since the start of his presidency in 1989, Rafsanjani made several efforts to improve Tehran-Washington relations. Rafsanjani, who publicly condemned Khomeini's policy of exporting revolution, deviated Iran's foreign policy from the past decade to improve Iran's relations with the outside world, the US in particular. One prominent scholar has noted that Iran's effort to improve relations with the West and the Arab regimes and end the export of the revolution with a lowered rhetoric against the US and Arab countries created a new driving force for Iran's international outlook and conduct—the “de-ideologization” of Iran's foreign policy.<sup>41</sup> In this context, Rafsanjani once more hoped for a different policy from the US.<sup>42</sup> With the aim of improving Iran-US bilateral relations, Tehran even invited a group of leading American journalists and editors to visit Iran in July 1994. The objective of the group was stated by Rafsanjani, to counter “the many lies said about Iran in the United States.” Later in an interview with the US television broadcaster Cable News Network (hereinafter CNN) on July 2, 1995, Iran's President sent a green signal for better relations with the US. In the conciliatory statement he urged that America and Iran should desist from raising tensions in their mutual relations signals a change in Tehran's policy.<sup>43</sup> Interestingly, when this positive gesture was made the US dual containment policy was in place and this dual containment policy was hurting Iran's economy badly and preventing it from recovery. In this context, in early November of 1994, Iran's Supreme Leader Ayatullah Khamenei was seen to castigate the US in this way: “America appears with a deceitful smile but has a dagger behind its back and is ready to plunder. That is its true nature.”<sup>44</sup>

Yet, Rafsanjani continued his efforts to engage with the US. As a result of his consistent efforts, on March 6, 1995, a \$1 billion deal was signed with a subsidiary of the US oil concern *Conoco* (see also chapter 6). One scholar has noted that on the US side, there was nothing illegal about the deal, and for months beforehand *Conoco* had been consulting with the State Department to ensure that the deal was politically feasible. But Israel (and some of US Arab allies) urged the US to scuttle the deal. Consequently, the US failed to respond to the Iranian offer. Later in May President Rafsanjani who was indeed sincere about his desire to reach out the US, stated plaintively: “We invited an American firm and entered into a deal for \$1 billion. This was a message to the United States, which was not correctly understood.”<sup>45</sup> Analysts are of the opinion that Iran was clearly interested in normalizing its relations with the US. But Washington's policy of containing Iran stood in the way of normalizing Iran-US relations. Under the circumstance, Iran tried to reach out the US by mollifying Israel. In March 1996, President Rafsanjani visited Islamabad, Pakistan and in a rare move, met with Yasser Arafat to reduce tensions between Iran and the Arab camp and thus to restart the stalled Israeli-Palestinian peace talks. Although Tehran continued to voice skepticism about the peace process, but Iran toned down its rhetoric against

the Palestinian leader and there were no more condemnations of Arafat's pursuit of a two state solution to the ongoing Israeli-Palestinian conflict. Iran also reduced its support to Lebanese Hizbullah and pushed the Islamist group to agree a cease-fire with Israel in April 1996 following a sixteen-day military conflict between Israel and Hizbullah.<sup>46</sup> Oddly enough, no Iranian efforts helped to reduce the gulf between Tehran and Washington while anti-Iranian Israeli propaganda continued unabated.

**(i) Anti-Iranian Israeli Propaganda: The Poisoning of the Iran-US Relations**

When the 1991 Madrid conference ended in failure partly because of Iran's critical role Israeli leadership accused Iran of "fanning all the flames in the Middle East" implying that failure to resolve the Israeli-Palestinian conflict was rooted in Iran's meddling rather than in the shortcomings of Israel and the Palestinians. Tel Aviv even depicted and described Iran as a larger-than-life enemy of US and Israel because of Iran's opposition to peace process and Iran's pursuit of long-range ballistic missiles<sup>47</sup> and nuclear programme (see section IV of this chapter). What did make Israel so anti-Iranian? According to James A. Bill, an eminent expert on Iran-US relations and Professor of Government and Director of the Reves Center for International Studies at the College of William and Mary, Virginia, USA, despite its traumatic revolution and devastating 95-month war with Iraq, the Islamic Republic of Iran stands as a regional giant. The defeat of Iraq in the 1991 Gulf War and thus the disappearance of the dreaded "eastern front" only confirmed Iran's status as a regional giant. This Iran's position antagonized Israel much who now began comparing Iran's Islamic ideology with Communism or Nazism and then invested heavily in a concerted campaign to denounce and vilify Iran and to present the Islamic Republic of Iran as "Enemy No. I."<sup>48</sup>

Additionally, Israel needed an existential threat (to build up its armed forces with sophisticated US weaponry) which it found in Iran. Some also argue that immediately after Bill Clinton was sworn in as President, the media in Israel and Israel's supporters in the US began a coordinated campaign to enlist America into an alliance against Iran.<sup>49</sup> It was under Israeli influence and propaganda, Washington not only began using an entirely new vocabulary to describe Iran and other states that it saw objectionable behaviour-*backlash*, *rogue*, *terrorist* and so on but also initiated dual containment policy as just noted. By October 1994, Washington started to adopt the Israeli line on Iran and adopted policy towards Iran accordingly making a rapprochement between Tehran and Washington quite difficult.<sup>50</sup> As time progressed, Israel not only welcomed the considerable souring of relations between Iran and the US but also exploited the ongoing Tehran-Washington hostile relations to its own benefit. Israel, which from the very first had supported the dual containment policy and influenced President Clinton to announce in 1995 a complete trade embargo on Iran (which Clinton chose to announce at a meeting of the World Jewish Congress in New York),<sup>51</sup> was determined that no Iran-US rapprochement should take

place before a change of regime or at least a fundamental shift in Iran's Middle East policies, most notably its attitude toward the Jewish state. Israel's view of Iran as an implacable foe that must be contained and weakened at all costs was thus firmly consolidated. This led Israel and its US supporters to ensure that America would not consider engagement with Iran anytime soon.<sup>52</sup> Meantime, having achieved initial successes with regard to demonizing Iran in the eyes of the US and influencing Washington to adopt containment policy, Israel and its lobby in the US—the AIPAC raised the bar and lobbied effectively and requested the US for additional pressure on Iran.<sup>53</sup> Scholars are in agreement that it was in Israel's interests to prevent President Clinton from pursuing engagement with Iran.<sup>54</sup>

#### **(j) The Khobar Bombing**

Another important issue that affected Iran-US relations very negatively during the Rafsanjani era was the Khobar bombing. On June 25, 1996, a bomb exploded at a US military housing complex (which provided housing for US military and Air Force personnel operating in the region) known as Khobar Towers at Dhahran in Saudi Arabia. The explosion killed 19 Americans and one Saudi national and wounded about five hundred more including civilians of other nationalities. The elements in Washington who were working for dooming of any rapprochement between Tehran and Washington quickly blamed Iran for the attack and as expected, the US government believed in Iran's responsibility for the attacks. Although Iran denied any involvement in the bombing, the issue became more complicated when Louis Freeh, who headed the FBI at the time in the investigation team of the incident, as part of the propaganda to demonize Iran, charged that the bombers received passports at the Iranian Embassy in Damascus and were paid \$250,000 by an Iranian Revolutionary Guards General by the name of Ahmad Sharifi. Freeh finally claimed that two leaders of the attack received sanctuary in Iran.<sup>55</sup> To convince this accusation, the US government simultaneously made other accusations. One of such accusations was that Iranian intelligence officials were alleged to have recruited Saudi Shiite on pilgrimages to a religious shrine in Damascus, Syria. Other one was that Iranian Revolutionary Guards had trained the bombers in Lebanon's Bekka Valley and provided the explosives for the blast.

Meanwhile, US Secretary of Defence visited Saudi Arabia after the bombing and on August 2, 1996, and accused Iran of the incident stating that Iran was "the leading candidate" for culprit. Around this time, a US federal court even speculated that the Supreme Leader Ayatullah Ali Khamenei had endorsed the attack. Quite contrary to the above accusations of Iran's involvement in the Khobar bombing facts began to appear otherwise. Many believe, the above-mentioned claims were all false blames placed on Iran very intentionally. Christin Marschall has noted: "Proof of the allegations could not be found. The Saudi government did not share its findings with Washington and it can be assumed that the culprits were Saudis opposed to the US presence on their soil."<sup>56</sup> In the end, when a US grand jury finally indicted fourteen people for the attack

there were no Iranians (13 Saudis and 1 Lebanese). In this context, in 2007, the former US secretary of Defense, William Perry, said in an interview that “Al Qaeda rather than Iran was behind a truck bombing at an American military base.” The truth about the Khobar attack became more clear when in June 2009, Gareth Porter wrote that “blaming for the Khobar bombing was a false leak released by U.S. officials and Saudi government” because the purpose was to save the Saudi face and obscure the act of their complicity in al-Qaeda’s attacking US targets, by using charities for funding purposes, as long as Bin Laden did not target the Saudi government. This was (and is) how the US either itself or at the suggestion of its allies including Israel and other Arab countries, adopted a ploy whenever and wherever necessary to vilify Iran and to blame Iran for any wrong doings. Consequently, Rafsanjani’s presidency came to an end without any breakthrough in Iran-US relations.<sup>57</sup>

**(k) The US Regime Change Machine**

The US policy of regime change in Iran has been a constant factor in Iran-US hostile relationship. In fact, the US has been persistently trying this regime change machine on the Islamic Republic of Iran since 1979. During the Khomeini’s lifetime several US attempts ended in dismal failure. Most observers of Iranian affairs and policy makers in Washington had long expected that Khomeini’s death would certainly create a power vacuum in Iran, with intense infighting among its Islamic leadership. Therefore, they waited for the collapse of the Islamic regime in Iran. Against the expectation, the Islamic Republic of Iran continued to survive under Khomeini’s successor—the new Supreme Leader Ayatullah Ali Khamenei—which meant the continuity of Iran-US enmity. The US government concluded that a return to the artificial intimacy with the post-Shah Iran was not possible, if not desirable for lack of mutual respect and trust and given the memories of regime change of 1953 and traumatic Hostage Crisis of 1979 but a measured and cautious policy might help the moderates of Iran (like Hashemi Rafsanjani) do no harm to US interests and might produce positive results.<sup>58</sup> This measured policy, however, did not prevent Washington from trying its regime change policy. Although in early 1989 the US President George H. Bush overtly offered a kind of hope by stating that good will begets goodwill, however, covertly his administration explored the idea of a regime change machine in Iran given perceived and real factional infighting in post-Khomeini Iran. Against this background, on September 7, 1989, a petition signed by 186 members of Congress that strongly advised the US government to support the Iranian opposition rather than try to help the moderates in power. Without a doubt, this was a concrete evidence of continued US hostility toward the Islamic Republic of Iran.<sup>59</sup> The Clinton administration accelerated Washington’s regime change policy in Iran. Although initially the dual containment was designed to exert economic and political pressure on Iran, including the use of covert CIA operations to curb Iran’s expansionist ambitions, however, the logical culmination of the containment policy was finally



argued the regime change in Iran by intensifying Iran's internal tensions and contradictions, as had happened in the case of the Soviet Union. The Clinton administration genuinely hoped that by 'containing' Iran, the Islamic regime in Tehran would implode very quickly.<sup>60</sup>

In line with this hope, the Clinton administration decided in principle to provide political and moral support to Iranian opposition groups (chiefly the MEK) residing overseas. In December 1993, President Bill Clinton wrote a letter to Massud Rajavi, leader of the MEK in which he promised to further the cause of democracy in Iran as a cornerstone for his foreign policy. The letter followed other important events for instance, a meeting between MEK and US officials including Vice President Al-Gore. President Clinton then signed an intelligence order and thus authorized the CIA to mount covert actions as enhanced containment through an aggressive anti-Iranian propaganda campaign "to change the nature of the Government of Iran".<sup>61</sup> The Congress came to the aid of CIA and on December 31, 1995 it passed a secret intelligence authorization act which included \$20 million earmarked for covert action against the Tehran regime.<sup>62</sup> The whole debate regarding an Iranian covert action programme took place publicly in the Congress in such manner that Iran's leadership got credible evidence of the US intention about the Islamic Republic of Iran. After that Iranian leadership started believing that regime change policy in Iran was US official policy and thus it would be misleading that the US threat of regime change or US hostile actions against Iran were 'perceived' or not real. Before long, Iran managed to uncover Frankfurt-based (Germany) CIA's entire covert action programme operations for Iran, which only consolidated the hostility between Tehran and Washington. Iran's Foreign Minister Velayati sent a written protest note to the UNSC arguing that current US "policy is nothing but a flagrant support of state terrorism in a clear and official form" and then demanding that it prohibit the US covert action programme, which "violates international law."<sup>63</sup>

### **Conclusion**

Iran's President Rafsanjani who positioned himself as a new and moderate voice in the midst of conservative clerics, made a number of positive gestures towards the US for a real reconciliation between Iran and the US. But these gestures were not met with similar gestures from his counterparts President George H. W. Bush and President Bill Clinton and thus the US remained as the nemesis to Iran as before. Middle East observers have argued that although Iran showed more pragmatism during Rafsanjani's presidency, the US began to play a more hegemonic role after the Soviet defeat in Afghanistan and then its collapse two years later that instantly relieved Washington from any anxieties about Soviet advances into Iran and the Persian Gulf. Additionally, US unwillingness to respond to Iranian overtures plus the initiation of the dual containment policy, and Israel's anti-Iran propaganda, the US regime change policy were the main catalysts for not improving Iran-US relations in the Rafsanjani era. Therefore, there were no improvements of Iran-US relations during this period of time from 1989 to 1997. As

Rafsanjani left the presidency, a new period of vigorous efforts towards Iran-US rapprochement began with the coming of President Mohammad Khatami in 1997 to which we now turn.

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15. Paul J. White and William Stewart Logan, *op., cit.*, p. 202; Christin Marschall, *op., cit.*, pp. 186-187.
16. Eva Patricia Rakel, *op., cit.*, pp. 161-162.
17. For more see Christin Marschall, *op., cit.*, p. 188; Adam Tarock, 'US: Iran Relations: Heading for Confrontation?', *Third World Quarterly*, Vol. 17, No. 1, March, 1996, p. 155.
18. Steven Wright, *The United States and Persian Gulf Security: The Foundations of the War on Terror*, Ithaca Press, UK, 2007, p. 97.
19. R. K. Ramazani, 'Iran's Foreign Policy: Both North and South', *Middle East Journal*, Vol. 46, No. 3, Summer, 1992, p. 403; Ray Takeyh, *Guardian of the Revolution: ...*, *op., cit.*, p. 168.
20. Kenneth M. Pollack, *The Persian Puzzle: ...*, *op., cit.*, p. 255.
21. A hegemon is any nation state exercising a disproportionate amount of power in its particular global or regional context.
22. Shireen T. Hunter, *Iran's Foreign Policy in the Post-Soviet Era: ...*, *op., cit.*, p. 50.
23. Fawaz A. Gerges, *America and Political Islam: ...*, *op., cit.*, pp. 74-77.
24. Since the US has no genuine intention to settle Arab-Israeli dispute through the Arab-Israeli or the Middle East peace process as the initiatives are so called, but to buy time to allow and continue Israeli crimes against humanity and strengthen the militant Jewish state militarily and territorially to achieve its geopolitical and economic goals in the region, analysts are doubtful about the prospects of these so-called peaceful initiatives. What is more, since 1991 it has been a US strategy to initiate false talks for the so-called Arab-Israeli peace process during and immediately after a war it waged against a country in the region deemed hostile to Israel. For example, after the 1991 Gulf War against Israel's arch enemy Iraq, the US initiated Madrid conference while after the 2003 Iraq War which toppled down Saddam's regime President Bush introduced a new plan in the name of the "Road Map" with the stated motive to settle the Arab-Israeli conflict and establish a two-state solution by 2005, but with the real motive to buy time and to keep the Arab alliance united who supported the US in Iraq war with US in case of a future war against any enemy of Israel (chiefly Iran) by focusing the problems but not to settle the issue peacefully forever.
25. For more on the Madrid Conference see Trita Parsi, *Treacherous Alliance: ...*, *op., cit.* pp. 151-156.
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27. John Felton, *The Contemporary Middle East: A Documentary History*, CQ Press, New York, 2008, pp. 138-139.

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28. Scott Ritter, *Target Iran: ... , op., cit.*, p. 22.
29. Fawaz A. Gerges, *America and Political Islam: ... , op., cit.*, p. 138; Shireen T. Hunter, *Iran's Foreign Policy in the Post-Soviet Era: ... , op., cit.*, p. 51; Trita Parsi, *Treacherous Alliance: ... , op., cit.* p. 175.
30. Warren Christopher had a personal, visceral dislike of Iran for his grueling negotiations with Iran to obtain the release of American held hostage in Tehran during the long-drawn traumatic Hostage Crisis of 1979-1981 which had played a critical role in bringing down the Carter Presidency and, with it, Christopher's hopes of becoming Secretary of State in a second Carter term.
31. Fawaz A. Gerges, *America and Political Islam: ... , op., cit.*, p. 127. See also: Trita Parsi, *Treacherous Alliance: ... , op., cit.* pp. 172, 185.
32. Fawaz A. Gerges, *America and Political Islam: ... , op., cit.*, p. 128.
33. *Op., cit.*, p. 115.
34. See Ray Takeyh, *Guardian of the Revolution: ... , op., cit.*, p. 162.
35. *Op., cit.*, pp. 21-28, 98;; Paul J. White and William Stewart Logan *op., cit.*, pp. 217-218.
36. Samuel P. Huntington, *The Clash of Civilizations and the Remaking of World Order*, Penguin Books, India, 1997, pp. 251-252.
37. Christin Marschall, *op., cit.*, p. 190; Steven Wright, *The United States and Persian Gulf Security: ... , op., cit.*, pp. 97-98.
38. Paul J. White and William Stewart Logan *op., cit.*, p. 216; Sasan Fayazmanesh, *The United States and Iran: ... , op., cit.*, p. 67; Eric Hooglund (ed.) *Twenty Years of Islamic Revolution: ... , op., cit.*, p. 169.
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44. Ray Takeyh, *Guardian of the Revolution: ... , op., cit.*, p. 162.
45. Fawaz A. Gerges, *America and Political Islam: ... , op., cit.*, p. 140.
46. Trita Parsi, *Treacherous Alliance: ... , op., cit.*, pp. 200-203.
47. See Saira Khan, *Iran and Nuclear Weapons: Protracted Conflict and Proliferation*, Routledge, London, 2010, pp. 51, 79; Kenneth M. Pollack, *The Persian Puzzle: ... , op., cit.*, p. 258.
48. James A. Bill, 'The United States and Iran: Mutual Mythologies', *Middle East Policy*, Vol. 2, Issue 3, September 1993, 98; Trita Parsi, *Treacherous Alliance: ... , op., cit.* pp. 162-164.
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## **Section II**

### **Iran-US Relations during the Khatami Era (1997-2005): Hopes for Rapprochement**

#### **Introduction**

The logjams of Iran-US relations that commenced with the downfall of Washington-backed Shah and the success of the Islamic Revolution in 1979 got a knee-jerk during the Rafsanjani presidency and started to break in 1997 when a new period ushered in with the victory of Sayyid Mohammad Khatami (1943-) in the Presidential election of the Islamic Republic of Iran on May 23, 1997. On the Iranian side, following Khatami's victory in the 1997 Presidential election more and more voices in Iran were calling for a dialogue with the US. Experts on Iran-US relations have termed these as the extraordinary historical turning points in Iran-US relations. Khatami, who won the election on a reformist agenda and a policy based on the principle of "reduction of tensions" and the "dialogue among civilizations"<sup>1</sup> gave priority to develop Iran's relations with the global community, in particular with the US. Perhaps for that reason, President Bill Clinton himself responded favourably, calling the 1997 Presidential election 'interesting' and 'hopeful'<sup>2</sup> noticing that Iranians overwhelmingly voted for Khatami for President over the candidate Majlis Speaker Ali Akbar Nateq Noori favored by the ruling religious establishment. Thus, Khatami's victory in the 1997 Presidential election of Iran provided a unique opportunity for an Iran-US rapprochement.

On the US side, policy makers in Washington gradually came to realize that US power is not boundless given the comparative failure of dual containment policy which aimed at containing both Iran and Iraq since 1993. Moreover, due to the unsupportive position of Tehran to the US-initiated Middle East peace process in the 1990s, the efforts produced little results in this regard. These hard political realities were slowly seeping into the consciousness of US foreign policy makers. As a result, experts in the Departments of State, Defense and Commerce became increasingly more sensitive to the need to mend relations with Iran than leaders in the White House and Congress who consistently opposed Iran-US reconciliation.<sup>3</sup> These changes of mindset both in the Iranians and Americans and their respective government officials paved the way for some diplomatic interactions between Iran and the US which in turn gave birth to years of hope for an Iran-US rapprochement since 1997. Although finally that hope dashed in 2002 by President Bush's "axis of evil" speech, Iran, in vain, continued its efforts during the Khatami era to reach out the US for normalizing Tehran-Washington relations. This section will survey Iran-US relations during the eventful Khatami years (1997-2005), highlighting what initiatives were taken and tried by Tehran and Washington and how far they were able to bring some important progresses in the rapprochement attempt between Iran and the US and what caused the undoing

of that progresses. To facilitate the discussion, the section is divided into three main parts with necessary sub-headings.

**A. The Iranian Initiatives**

**i. Change in Foreign Policy Considerations and Dialogue among Civilizations**

The victory of Mohammad Khatami in the 1997 Presidential election of Iran marked the beginning of a new era in Iran's foreign relations and so did in Iran-US relations. As examined in the previous section, from 1989 to 1997 Khatami's predecessor President Hashemi Rafsanjani 'undertook an unprecedented expansion of Iran's foreign relations' to mend Tehran's relations with the world community including the US. Conversely, Washington under the Bush and Clinton administrations followed the path of containing Iran and thus the political enmity between Tehran and Washington continued to surface during the last days of President Rafsanjani. In this context, Iran's new President Mohammad Khatami pledged to promote the concepts of "Islamic civil society," "Islamic democracy," as opposed to Western notion of secular and liberal democracy and floated a new theory by the name of "dialogue among civilizations" in the conduct of Iran's foreign relations. Hence, scholars have rightly termed President Khatami's foreign policy as 'conciliatory and proactive foreign policy'<sup>4</sup> which was driven by two important goals: to create strong links between domestic issues and foreign policy and to improve Iran's relations with the world through a policy of détente and mutual respect. Under this change in foreign policy affairs, Khatami's attempts at reaching an understanding with the West, particularly with the US included among other things the replacement of the devoted and dedicated director of Iran's nuclear programme by moderate ones, and the appointment of moderates to his cabinet, most importantly Foreign Minister Kamal Kharazi who strongly advocated talks with the US and said establishing "normal" relations with the US "does not conflict with the main principles of the Islamic Revolution".<sup>5</sup> Because of his new foreign policy orientation, the Iranian navy halted its provocative maneuvers and acted with respect towards the patrolling US vessels in the Persian Gulf waters, Iran, for the first time cooperated with the US-led UN imposed multilateral sanctions against Iraq by preventing the country from smuggling oil through Iranian waters in the Gulf. Kenneth M. Pollack and Joseph Kostiner have considered this as a major and serious diplomatic gesture towards US. In line with these gestures towards the US, Khatami succeeded in patching up difference with European Union, rebuild relations with US allies Saudi Arabia and Egypt.

In an effort to establish Iran's relations with the US allies in the Western Europe, the Khatami government even put an end to much-debated Rushdie issue by vowing not to implement Khomeini's fatwa. The Khatami government also sacked Iran's chief of Intelligence Ali Fallahian, who was accused of being behind the murders of Iranian dissidents in Europe. In response to such Iranian moves, the European policy toward Iran transformed from "critical

dialogue”<sup>6</sup> to “constructive engagement” and this influenced a lot the US to soften its attitude towards Iran. In an unprecedented move towards Iran-US rapprochement, Khatami advocated for offering positive gestures first to the US and waited for similar responses. This may be characterized as Iran’s policy of appeasement of the US. This policy of appeasement reached its climax when Khatami proposed for “dialogue among civilizations.” In fact, his moderate and non-confrontational approach to foreign policy, his declared aim of establishing a “dialogue of civilizations” helped him a lot to reach to US at least during his first term in presidency. Khatami hoped to re-establish a dialogue with the Americans that has been virtually suspended since 1979. In a news conference held on December 14, 1997, Iran’s President Khatami pointed out: “I, first of all, pay my respect to the great people and nation of America ... I would hope for a thoughtful dialogue with the American people and through this thoughtful dialogue we could get closer to peace and security and tranquility.”<sup>7</sup>

Reportedly, to show his seriousness towards the Iran-US rapprochement, Khatami said it was “a source of sorrow” to him that Iran and the US had not done more to reconcile: “Instead of talking with forked tongues, we want to have a rational dialogue”.<sup>8</sup> Instead of blaming the “Great Satan”—the US—for all of Iran’s troubles, Khatami stated: “Let us not doubt that unless we undergo an inner transformation, we cannot expect external forces to solve our problems for us.”<sup>9</sup> Later on, in an address in Tehran, he clearly rejected Samuel P. Huntington’s militant theory—“clash of civilizations”—which simplistically asserted that in the post-Communist era, global conflicts would proceed along civilizational fault lines (mainly Western civilization versus Islamic civilization) and called instead for dialogue between Islam and the West. This is how slowly but steadily, Khatami tried to normalize Iran’s foreign policy and signaled the change in Iran’s foreign relations with the US and the world community. Given the rocky and hostile history of Iran-US relations since 1979, Khatami’s words unquestionably heralded a dramatic and new approach of Tehran for an Iran-US rapprochement. In essence, Khatami’s dialogue among civilizations was not a mere slogan but a sincere belief that détente and cooperation were the best means of advancing Iran’s practical interests with bridging its relations with the outside world, the US in particular. In this way, Khatami attempted to move Iran “from confrontation to conciliation”.

One Iranian scholar has observed that Khatami’s dialogue among civilizations gave Iran “a specific reputation without which no diplomatic effort on its part would have succeeded in getting substantial results.”<sup>10</sup> Khatami’s offer of dialogue among civilizations was widely accepted<sup>11</sup> while it raised the hope for a rapprochement between Iran and the US as his offer of dialogue among civilizations unequivocally voiced for informal dialogue between the Iranians and Americans. In the offer Khatami clearly underlined how his dialogue among civilizations would help Iran and the US to come closer. He emphasized that the time for direct government-

to-government talks was not ripe and suggested that a dialogue should begin at the “people-to-people level” through cultural, academic, and athletic exchanges. To that end, he dispatched numerous academics, former government officials, businessmen, and other supporters of his government to the US for informal meetings that could explore the possibility of an Iran-US rapprochement. They got into contact with Americans inside and outside the government. Kenneth M. Pollack, who himself and other American academics, former government officials, and businesspeople met and spoke with more than a dozen of such Iranian unofficial diplomats in various informal meetings, noted that these Iranian envoys came with a clear message and a mission of real change that was taking place in Iran and Khatami and those around him wanted to explore the possibility of beginning a process of rapprochement between Iran and the US.<sup>12</sup>

## **ii. Khatami’s Further Overtures to the US through CNN Interviews**

In his January 7, 1998 CNN interview with noted Iranian-born CNN correspondent Christiane Amanpour (who is of Iranian descent), Khatami extended an olive branch to the American people. He began with a long discourse paying tribute to the “great American people” and explaining some of Iran’s historical grievances against the US. Citing US-orchestrated 1953 coup d’état, Khatami stated: “There is a bulky wall of mistrust between us and the U.S. administration, a mistrust rooted in improper behaviors of the American governments.”<sup>13</sup> He pointed out that political and diplomatic relations between Iran and the US would be possible only when Washington dropped its antagonistic attitude toward Tehran. He also figured out that anti-American slogans and the burning of the US flag in Iran as the “wall of mistrust” that existed between Iran and the US and that is why he distanced himself from those activities. Fully recognizing the existing hostility between Iran and the US, he called for “crack in this wall of mistrust to prepare for a change and create an opportunity to study a new situation.”<sup>14</sup> He explicitly condemned terrorism and made it clear that Iran did not “aim ... to destroy or undermine the American government” and that he sincerely regretted the infamous takeover of the US Embassy in 1979.<sup>15</sup> Finally, he pledged that such “unconventional methods” would not and could not be employed in today’s Iran. This came as a clear message to the US government that Iran had changed a lot and was abiding international law and willing to bury enmity with the US.

## **iii. Iranian Gestures to Israel**

The painful legacy of anti-Iranian Israeli propaganda during the Rafsanjani era led President Khatami to moderate Iran’s stance toward Israel. Khatami clearly understood that without appeasing or reaching out Israel an Iran-US rapprochement was not possible. Although during his last year in office President Rafsanjani was seen softening Iran’s opposition to Israeli-Palestinian conflict as examined in the previous section, President Khatami became more open to Israel perhaps realizing the fact that road to Washington must be via Tel Aviv. This was

demonstrated in his January 7, 1998, CNN interview when although Khatami opposed the Arab-Israeli peace process on the grounds that it would not work, however he did not attack Israel and drew a clear distinction between the Israeli people and their government. Political analysts have argued that this position indicated Islamic Republic's willingness indirectly to recognize the state of Israel.<sup>16</sup> Following Khatami's such gesture, some cabinet members of his government went further to appease the US by offering olive branch also to Israel. Moving one step ahead from the past policy, one of Khatami's Vice Presidents by the name of Abdullah Nouri granted an interview to an Israeli daily. It was the first such interview given to an Israeli daily by an Iranian government official since the 1979 Islamic Revolution. The Vice President endorsed Iran's relations with the US and Israel and claimed to support a dialogue between the citizens of Iran and Israel, but said it was too early for an official political dialogue. Another Vice President, the first female Vice President of Iran by the name of Massoumeh Ebtekar reportedly told an Israeli newspaper *Yediot Aharanot* in February 1998, at the World Economic Forum in Davos, Switzerland, that Iran would welcome a dialogue with Israel on non-political matters.<sup>17</sup> In this context, President Khatami wrote a letter to Yasser Arafat in which he "backed Palestinian participation in the Middle East peace process, acknowledged Israel's legitimacy, and discussed the possibility of a region-wide peace if the Palestinians were allowed to establish a state on the West Bank and Gaza". Khatami also publicly denounced terrorism and the killing of Israeli citizens, which was a significant move towards accommodating the demands of the US.<sup>18</sup> These Iranian gestures towards Israel were for the simple reason that Israel would not undermine an Iran-US rapprochement, however, few in the US paid attention to this subtle but crucial shift of Iran's foreign policy towards Israel.

#### iv. **Iran Assisted the US in Afghanistan: Two Bitter Friends<sup>19</sup> at Work**

The September 11, 2001 tragedy commonly known as the 9/11 attacks and subsequent US war in Afghanistan changed the hostile course of Iran-US relations to a more cooperative one and thus two bitter friends engaged heavily for a common issue for the first time since 1979. Iranian government strongly condemned the 9/11 attacks and a few days after the attacks, Tehran mayor Morteza Alviri sent a message of condolence to New York City mayor Rudolph Giuliani. This was the first public contact between Iran and the US since the 1979 Islamic Revolution. Additionally, President Khatami condemned the attacks terming them as "the anti-human and anti-Islamic acts". In a letter to UN Secretary General Kofi Anan, Khatami suggested that a meeting of heads of states be held to adopt measures to fight terrorism. According to investigative journalist-writer Barbara Slavin, while much of the Muslim world appeared to sympathize with the hijackers, Iran's President Khatami expressed his sympathy towards the Americans and strongly condemned the attacks. Even radicals of the Islamic Republic of Iran toned down their usual anti-US rhetoric not in fear, but in true sense of the term, out of deference



to the victims of the attacks. Iranians also responded to the US tragedy with empathy and condolences. There were marches in the streets to condemn terrorism and to express Iranian solidarity with the Americans a rare gesture from the Iranian side to the Americans. Barbara Slavin, who visited Iran a few months after the 9/11 attacks, has also noted that Iran's Supreme Leader Ayatullah Ali Khamenei suspended the ritual chant of "Death to America" at Friday prayers in Iran for several weeks as a show of respect or out of deference to American feelings.<sup>20</sup> Barbara Slavin has also stated that Iranian parliamentarians, previously fearful of praising Americans on the record to foreign journalists, now openly advocated restoring relations with the US.<sup>21</sup>

However, in a surprising manner, the congressionally appointed 9/11 Commission following the 9/11 attacks from the very beginning tried to establish a false myth that Iran's Quds force (after an air force, ground force, navy, and *Basij* of the Revolutionary Guards) and al-Qaeda<sup>22</sup> had links since early 1990s and Iran might be behind the 9/11 attacks. Although the commission found no evidence that Iran or Hezbollah was aware of the planning for the 9/11 attacks,<sup>23</sup> but commission's bizarre and unfounded finding of Iranian connection with al-Qaeda influenced the US a lot to stiffen its attitude towards Iran. Reportedly, an influential pressure group by the name of the Project for the New American Century (PNAC)<sup>24</sup> also urged President Bush to retaliate against Iran if it failed to bring an immediate end to its support for the Hizbullah.<sup>25</sup> Despite such initial anti-Iranian US position, the 9/11 attacks brought the two hostile countries to very closer in the end. Following the 9/11 attacks the US declared "war on terror" against terrorist organization al-Qaeda which had firm basis in Afghanistan and for that the US conducted a military invasion in Afghanistan code-named "Operation Enduring Freedom" in October 2001. Iran offered critical help to the US in the war against the Taliban regime in Afghanistan. It is pertinent to mention that despite the fact that Iran was fearful of the Bush administration's (2001-2008) insistence on spreading democracy in the Middle East and prospects of a regime change in Iran, President Khatami decided to cooperate with the US in Afghanistan. In response, the US welcomed Iranian cooperation. Thus, the September 11 attacks provided the opportunity for the first real military cooperation between Iran and the US in Afghanistan since the 1979 Islamic Revolution.

Arguably, concurring and conflicting interests of Tehran and Washington in West Asia, helped change the calculations of their national interests and made their such conciliatory positions in Afghanistan.<sup>26</sup> In the context of 9/11 attacks, both Iran and the US were seriously alarmed by the postures and activities of Taliban of Afghanistan and they emphatically characterized the Taliban threat in politically and strategically inclusive terms. This concurring interest of Iran and the US had placed these two arch rivals or "bitter friends" so called by Barbara Slavin, to think in the

way to cope with their common enemy—the Taliban of Afghanistan. The irony of the history here however is that once the Clinton administration had created Taliban partly due to counter Iran's influence in the region as stated in the previous section, and now the Bush administration had to fight the Taliban and their removal with Iran's assistance.<sup>27</sup> After the removal of the Taliban government both parties agreed to cooperate in forming a new government for Afghanistan. Thus, the post-9/11 time appeared to be an important opportune moment for the US to improve Tehran-Washington relations. Oddly, Iranian cooperation in Afghanistan did not reach a logical conclusion as many observers expected for two reasons. Firstly, although the Bush administration initially appreciated Iranian crucial assistance to the US in Afghanistan, however, it became concerned about Iran's growing presence in western Afghanistan.

Secondly, fearful of initial Iran-US cooperation in Afghanistan, Israel and its lobby in the US—the AIPAC, hard-liners in the White House and in the Pentagon within and outside the Bush administration who were commonly known as the neocons or neoconservatives now turned to be confrontationalists manipulated this new development (Iran's presence in Afghanistan) along with the *Karine-A* incident and President Bush's "Axis of Evil" speech (see below) and moved to desist from rewarding Iran. They strongly advocated and proposed for more anti-Iranian policy including a military attack on Iran as soon as the US war in Afghanistan was over. In support of their proposal, they even argued that Iran must be targeted before Iraq and used the long list of menu option, which included Iran's involvement in the alleged *Karine-A* affair, Iran providing weapons to, and working with, "the Lebanese militant group Hezbollah," "Iran's pursuit of missiles capable of striking Israel with chemical and biological weapons," Iran dispatched "Revolutionary Guards to foment anti-Israel activity in Lebanon," Iran being on "schedule to develop a nuclear bomb by 2005," etc.<sup>28</sup> However, when Israeli Prime Minister Ariel Sharon (2001-2006) and his lieutenants clearly recognized by early 2002 that the US was determined to confront first with Iraq before Iran, they did not raise serious objections to this ordering of the agenda. Rather they continued their anti-Iranian propaganda to influence the policymakers in Washington that the US had to deal with Iran as soon as it finished the job in Iraq. For example, in an interview with the *Times* of London in November 2002, Sharon described Iran as the "center of world terror" and bent on acquiring nuclear weapons. Then he urged the Bush administration to put the strong arm on Iran "the day after" it conquered Iraq.<sup>29</sup> However, President Khatami remained conciliatory because by September 2002 majority Iranians favoured some form of dialogue with the US.<sup>30</sup>

#### **v Iran Assisted the US in Iraq, but Got Blame In Return**

Flushed with an easy victory in Afghanistan in 2001 chiefly due to Iran's crucial assistance, the Bush administration quickly moved to remove Iraq's Saddam Hussein who Washington considered another potential enemy because of his uncompromising attitude towards the US

since 1988 and for his strong anti-Israeli credential. Focusing on the stated motives,<sup>31</sup> a traditional US policy to secure its interests, but with the real motives of safeguarding its ally Israel from the aggressive glory-seeking Arab leader Saddam Hussein as well as to have an easy access to Iraqi oil<sup>32</sup> and finally to export democracy throughout the Middle East under the Bush Doctrine,<sup>33</sup> the US launched a preemptive attack on Iraq in the name of ‘Operation Iraqi Freedom’ on March 18, 2003. Initially Iran opposed US preemptive action because it viewed that without a UN mandate the US action in Iraq was a “dangerous precedent” which might be applied against Tehran’s Islamic regime in future. Yet, Iran’s leadership showed their wisdom of diplomacy in a timely fashion by extending support to US in removing Saddam Hussein from power for this time also two bitter friends found their common enemy in Saddam Hussein. After the war in Iraq, Iran also proved to be of considerable assistance to the US reconstruction effort and more helpful than it had been in Afghanistan. Kenneth M. Pollack has put: “If the Iranians wanted to create chaos in Iraq, they could have easily done so in the darkest days after the war, and the United States was fortunate that they did not.”<sup>34</sup> However, once Iraq slipped into chaos and near civil war following the war and the US had to suffer human and material loss, it quickly placed blame on Iran for all. The US also blamed Iran for the fear that least Iran would be rewarded for its cooperation in Iraq which the Bush administration did not want. Thus whatever the prospect for the improvement of Iran-US relations appeared in the beginning of the Iraq war disappeared with such US blaming of Iran.

#### **vi The Iranian Grand Bargain Offer: A Missed Opportunity**

There is no dispute that the Iranian cooperation first in Afghanistan and then in Iraq since March 2003 opened the window of opportunity for a good understanding between Iran and the US. It is argued that despite Bush’s labeling of Iran as a member of axis of evil (elaborated below) with Iraq and North Korea in January 2002 the period between the 9/11 attacks and May 2003 was the most propitious time in the history of Iran-US relations since the 1979 Islamic Revolution for the two countries to establish ties,<sup>35</sup> because by 2003 the wrangle between Iran and US had reached a point where a settlement seemed profitable for both sides. The US invasion of Iraq in 2003 created opportunities for Washington to engage with Iran, especially after US expectation of early stabilization of the country. In the meanwhile, Saddam’s removal brought the US—an arch enemy of the Islamic Republic of Iran—in Iran’s doorstep. This US position actually created a sense of hope and fear in the Iranian authority. Also in fear of a Iraq-like US military attack on Iran and realizing that US dependence on Iran for Iraqi stability in the post-Saddam period might be helpful for future opening between Iran and the US, the Khatami government which had been working tirelessly for Iran-US rapprochement since 1997, now approached to the US with the famously known “grand bargain” offer (see Appendices) in the belief that a long-term

understanding with the US would be reached by putting a halt to hostile US behavior and the US would acknowledge Iran's role as a major strategic player in the Persian Gulf.<sup>36</sup>

The grand bargain letter had two sections and these included an outline of Iran and the US aims and a proposed procedure on how to advance the negotiations. Although in the grand bargain offer Iran clearly specified major concerns and aims of both Tehran and Washington and how the two parties could work for a negotiated settlement in a bid to improve their relations, the offer was not well received by the Bush administration. Rather than to be conciliatory towards the Iranian offer, the Bush administration rejected outright the offer "in large part because its basic policy formulation was one of regime change in Iran, not negotiating the continued existence of that regime".<sup>37</sup> Analysts also view, the grand bargain offer came at a time when the US felt that it did not need to talk to Iran or to make any concessions to Tehran. Just like following the victory in the 1991 Gulf War the then George H. W. Bush administration felt that it did not need to compensate Rafsanjani for having secured the freedom of the last American hostage in Lebanon, the junior Bush administration basking in the quick success of the 2003 Iraqi operation felt the same way and rejected the Iranian grand bargain offer of 2003. In fact, in view of transforming the Middle East states into democratic polities in the wake of the 2003 Iraq war, the Bush administration (hugely influenced by hard-liners neoconservatives in Washington as well as Israel and the AIPAC (who interpreted Iranian grand bargain offer as a sign of weakness) rejected Iran's offer to begin broad negotiations for Tehran-Washington reconciliation. An opportunity for a major breakthrough regarding Iran-US rapprochement was thus willfully wasted to which Paul R. Pillar, former national intelligence officer for the Near East and South Asia, has characterized as a "missed opportunity".<sup>38</sup>

## **B. US Responses**

### **I. Initial Cautious and Conditional Responses to Iranian Overtures**

Washington saw all the above-mentioned Iranian gestures under President Khatami as good signs and dramatic change on Iran's part. What impressed the Clinton administration most was that Khatami was guided by pragmatic concerns and practical and tactical goals rather than only Islamic revolutionary zeal. Yet, the US was seen to take some cautious gestures in a slow and pre-conditional fashion. Upon Khatami's victory in the 1997 Presidential election of Iran, the Clinton administration made it clear that Iran-US relations could not improve unless and until Iran changes its policies and unacceptable international behavior clearly indicating Iran's opposition to US policies, denouncement of its ally Israel, and support for Israel's enemies (Hizbullah, HAMAS etc). The State Department expressed cautious remarks in this way: "We listened with interest to President Khatami's interview on CNN. We welcome the fact that he wants a dialogue with the American people and welcome his appreciation of the fundamental principles that form the foundation of our nation ... Ultimately, real improvement will not

depend upon what the government of Iran says but what it does.”<sup>39</sup> Finally it concluded: “it’s too early to tell whether this (i.e., Khatami’s gestures) represents an offer or not.”<sup>40</sup>

## **II. The So-called Track-two Diplomacy**

In line with the cautious responses, the Clinton administration initially made some smaller positive gestures towards Iran, most notably by encouraging cultural and other exchanges within the framework of ‘the so-called Track-two diplomacy’.<sup>41</sup> In February 1998, the Clinton administration authorized an American wrestling team to participate in the Takhti Cup tournament in Tehran. The US wrestlers were the first Americans officially represented their country in Iran since 1979. Many compared it to the American “ping-pong diplomacy” with China in the 1970s. Following this development, scores of Iranians and Americans visited each other’s country. It was expected that visits from both countries would help educate and learn a greater number of Iranians and Americans about their respective political settings, with potentially positive results for the long term. Sadly enough, the benefits of this diplomacy were very negligible for overall improvement of Iran-US relations. The reason was that a good number of scholars from the US who generally opposed to the idea of any rapprochement between Tehran and Washington visited Iran and used their first-hand knowledge better to justify their uncompromising position toward it. This section of scholars from whom some of the most hard-line opinions on Iran came, only benefitted themselves from these exchanges by spending time in Iran and doing research in government institutions but did no more favor in the rapprochement attempt.<sup>42</sup>

## **III. President Clinton’s Messages to the Iranians**

Meanwhile, in a rare move in January 1998, President Clinton in a videotaped message addressed the Iranian people on the holy Eid al-Fitr—the Muslim Festival celebrated after the holy month of Ramadan in fasting. In the message, Clinton stated that the US regretted the estrangement of the two nations, that he believed differences in policies were “not insurmountable” and that he hoped that soon the two countries could enjoy once again good relations.<sup>43</sup> President Clinton also surprised many Iran-US experts when on the eve of a football game between Iran and the US at the World Cup in France on June 21, 1998 (which ended 2-1 goals victory for Iran), he took opportunity to reciprocate Iranian President Khatami’s earlier gestures and tried to reach out directly to the soccer-crazy Iranians. Right before the beginning of the game, Clinton’s prerecorded statement was aired worldwide in which the President says: “As we cheer today’s game between American and Iranian athletes, I hope it can be another step toward ending the estrangement between our nations. President Khatami and I have both worked to encourage more people-to-people exchanges, and to help our citizens develop a better understanding of each other’s rich civilizations.”<sup>44</sup> Later at an April 12, 1999, White House dinner celebrating the impending change of millennium, President Clinton who was by now eager to set aside past

grievances, unequivocally stated: “I think it is important to recognize that Iran, because of its enormous geopolitical importance, over time has been the subject of quite a lot of abuse from various Western nations.”<sup>45</sup>

Acknowledging the Iranian grievances for the first time, Clinton added that Americans should set aside their “total denial” about Iran’s grievances. Clinton also tacitly acknowledged the US legacy of interference in Iranian domestic affairs. Scholars have put by admitting that this was the closest any president had come to acknowledging that Iran had legitimate complaints about past US activities there.<sup>46</sup> The US under President Clinton also made no reference to Iran as a “rogue” or “outlaw” state; removed Iran from the narcotics list; designed the MEK and its multiple front organization as a terrorist organization; cooperated with Iran on the “6+2”<sup>47</sup> talks on Afghanistan at the UN; waved sanctions against foreign oil companies that invested in Iran; lifted restrictions on the sale of agricultural and medical goods to Iran; authorized the sale of spare parts needed to ensure the safety of civilian passenger aircraft previously sold to Iran; and eased of visa restrictions and regulations for academic exchanges and for travel by Iranian UN diplomats in the US.<sup>48</sup> In another rare gesture, President Clinton made a point of sitting through President Khatami’s speech at the UN General Assembly in September 2000. This is something a US President “never does: he arrives, makes his speech, and leaves”—commented Kenneth M. Pollack.<sup>49</sup> Many expected that after Khatami’s speech he and the US President might be able to meet and shake hands on the UN floor. However, that did not happen. Despite this course of Iran-US relations, experts on Iran-US relations agree that all these US overtures represented an important shift in US foreign policy during Khatami’s first two years in office and unquestionably raised the hopes of Iran-US rapprochement.

#### **IV. Secretary of State Madeleine Albright Hints at the Normalization of Iran-US Relations**

While President Clinton was sending positive messages, his Secretary of State Madeleine Albright hinted for the normalization of US relations with Iran. On June 17, 1998, Albright gave an important speech to the Asia Society proposing that Tehran and Washington work together for ‘a road map’ that would eventually lead them to the normalization of their relations.<sup>50</sup>

In this way, Albright spelled out a new US policy towards Iran and alluded the possibility of future Iran-US relations. Ghoncheh Tazmini, a researcher fellow at the Institute for Strategic and International Studies, Lisbon, Portugal and the author of *Khatami’s Iran: The Islamic Republic and the Turbulent Path to Reform* has noted that Albright’s speech did not offer any specific new policies, but it projected the prospect of a new beginning.<sup>51</sup> In the following years Secretary of State Madeleine Albright addressed the Iran issue in a more positive way. In a significant gesture, on March 17, 2000 she made a ground-breaking speech before the American-Iranian

Council (AIC), a group promoting better relations between Iran and the US, confessing of previous American misdeeds on Iran. Some portions of Albright's speech are worth quoting.

In 1953, the United States played a significant role in orchestrating the overthrow of Iran's popular Prime Minister, Mohammed Mossadegh. The Eisenhower administration believed its actions were justified for strategic reasons; but the coup was clearly a setback for Iran's political development. And it is easy to see now why many Iranian continue to resent this intervention by America in their internal affairs. ... As President Clinton has said, the United States must bear its fair share of responsibility for the problems that have arisen in U.S.-Iranian relations. Even in more recent years, aspects of U.S. policy towards Iraq, during its conflict with Iran appear now to have been regrettably shortsighted, especially in light of our subsequent experiences with Saddam Hussein. ... Neither Iran, nor we, can forget the past. It has scarred us both. ... We want to work together with Iran to bring down what President Khatami refers to as "the wall of mistrust." ... The United States is willing either to proceed patiently, on step-by-step basis, or to move very rapidly if Iran indicates a desire and commitment to do so. ... I call upon Iran to join us in writing a new chapter in our shared history. Let us be open about our differences and strive to overcome them. Let us acknowledge our common interests and strive to advance them.<sup>52</sup>

Albright's remarks were the first public explicit acknowledgement by a senior US official of Washington's part in the 1953 CIA-engineered coup d'état, which was one of Tehran's major grievances when it comes to Iran's relations with the US. In fact, this was the most important opening to Iran on the part of US during the Clinton administration. Observers on Iran-US relations agree that with all limitations of the language, this was the most far-reaching expression of American interest in rapprochement with Iran since the 1979 Iranian Islamic Revolution. Albright's admission was a great leap forward in terms of the improvement of Iran-US relations although she did not apologize publicly for US past actions in Iran. Sasan Fayazmanesh is of the opinion that although the intention of Albright was not to set the historical records straight, yet the "ultimate change of heart" of the Americans "was expressed" in Albright's speech.<sup>53</sup>

#### **V. The Bush Administration: Undoing of All Attempts towards Iran-US Rapprochement**

Despite the seemingly US soft position on Iran under the Clinton administration, it appeared significantly difficult to reduce tension between Iran and the US.<sup>54</sup> In this background, the US foreign policy witnessed a sea change with the change in leadership in January 2001 when anti-Iranian hardline George W. Bush (2001-2008) assumed the presidency in US. The new US President entirely negated Clinton's conciliatory moves towards Iran and influenced by pro-Israel evangelical Christians, the neoconservatives (commonly known as the neocons led by pro-Israeli Richard Perle, Paul Wolfowitz, Douglas Feith and other who controlled the Bush administration), and ultranationalists, President George W. Bush adopted virulent anti-Iranian foreign policy. For example, in 2001, as part of an anti-Iranian policy, the new Bush administration pressured on

Central Asian nations to send their oil west out to Turkey rather than using the shortest route, south through Iran to the Persian Gulf. The anti-Iran policy continued and with time it only got momentum. Particularly, two incidents, which were seen as outcomes of Bush administration's anti-Iran policy, turned the tide of normalization of Iran-US relations into opposite direction. These are analyzed briefly.

**(a) The so-called *Karine-A* Episode: A Bolt from the Blue to the Normalization of Iran-US Relations**

It is historically truth that the end of the Cold War in 1991 paved the way for the emergence of a uni-polar system based on a benign US hegemony.<sup>55</sup> Only a decade later the US under President George W. Bush—son of the former President George H. W. Bush threw out its shell of benign hegemony and opted for the aggressive hegemony. In essence, the 9/11 attacks catapulted the US from the benign hegemony of the 1990s to the aggressive hegemony of the 2000s which was first demonstrated in the US war in Afghanistan in 2001. After the US war in Afghanistan, the Bush administration directed its unilateral and preemptive strategy towards Iraq, Iran, Syria, and the Sudan.<sup>56</sup> The *Karine-A* episode of January 4, 2002 and Bush's "Axis of Evil" speech of January 29, 2002 came in this background. A careful and in-depth study also shows that together with the neoconservatives of the Bush administration Israel played critical and intriguing role in staging the so-called *Karine-A* drama. As examined in the previous section, Israel began to view Iran as its number one enemy since the early 1990s and thereafter, it has become Israel's established policy to stand in the way of any future rapprochement between Tehran and Washington. Israel got alarmed when both Iran and the US engaged themselves over the US war in Afghanistan since October 2001 and a rapprochement between Tehran and Washington seemed to be inevitable. An 'incensed' and impatient Israel and the neoconservatives in the US now "tirelessly sought ways to put a halt to the U.S.-Iranian cooperation".<sup>57</sup> To prevent Iran-US rapprochement they jointly invented a near-to-be-credible-story by the name of *Karine-A* to poison American minds about Iran.<sup>58</sup> According to the cooked-up story, on January 4, 2002, Israeli chief of general staff Lieutenant General Shaul Mofaz declared that Israel had captured a ship by the name of *Karine-A* laden with 50 tons of arms (including rockets, mortars, and antitank weapons, mines, explosives, rifles, and ammunition) in the Red Sea bound for Yasser Arafat's Palestinian Authority in Gaza. According to the Israeli government, the shipment was originated in Iran and Hizbullah, which has close ties with Iran, was also involved in the operation.<sup>59</sup>

The story was told in Washington in a convincing fashion. To make the story more convincing it was even claimed that the Qods force of Iran might have sabotaged efforts by President Khatami to improve relations with the US by authorizing the arms shipment to the Palestinians without his knowledge and Hizbullah operations chief Mughniyah was said to have supervised loading the



weapons onto the *Karine-A* while the ship was in Iranian-controlled waters near an island in the Persian Gulf where the Guards had private ports.<sup>60</sup> A noted US scholar by the name of William O. Beeman has stated that the accusation had been repeated continually from January 2002 until April by one or another Israeli politician. However, this was never substantiated. Israeli intelligence reportedly showed “incontrovertible evidence” to US intelligence sources, who then informed the press that they believed it, however, the “evidence” was never made public.<sup>61</sup> Iran sent a message to the US through the Swiss Embassy in Tehran denying any involvement in the affair and repeated the request for information from the US and offered to give Washington any information Iran might uncover. For unclear reason, the Bush administration remained unresponsive and never provided Tehran with any evidence for the Israeli claim. For such behavior of the Bush administration the entire affair seemed to be bogus. Because of the mysterious nature of the episode even some officials in the Bush administration questioned the authenticity of the affair and they speculated that it was staged by the Israelis.<sup>62</sup> However, the Bush administration readily accepted and then used the *Karine-A* episode as “compelling” evidence of Iranian involvement with terrorism and thus justified its vilification of Iran as a supporter of terrorism. The carefully-designed-the *Karine-A*-incident thus provided Israel and the hard-liners of the Bush administration with a golden opportunity to influence President Bush to adopt more anti-Iran policy.<sup>63</sup>

**(b) Bush’s Axis of Evil Speech: The Dashing away of the Remaining Hopes of Iran-US Rapprochement**

The intriguing aspect of the Iran-US relations of this time around was that the US quickly moved to demonize Iran once its war in Afghanistan with Iranian crucial assistance was over and once its goal in Afghanistan was achieved. The anti-Iranian policy makers in Washington associated with Israel and its lobby—the AIPAC, being reinvigorated with the *Karine-A* episode, brainstormed an idea to speed up anti-Iran sentiment in the US. On the eve of State of the Union Address of January 2002 by President Bush, a speechwriter by the name of David Frum had suggested the word “axis” to refer to US enemies in a draft. Another speechwriter named Michael Gerson turned the word into the phrase “axis of evil,” and the hard-line President Bush himself filled in the blanks with Saddam’s Iraq, North Korea and Iran.<sup>64</sup> After that on January 29, 2002, President Bush delivered his State of the Union Address in which he stated:

North Korea is a regime arming with missiles and weapons of mass destruction, while starving its citizens. Iran aggressively pursues these weapons and exports terror, while an unelected few repress the Iranian people’s hope for freedom. Iraq continues to flaunt its hostility toward America and to support terror. ... States like these, and their terrorist allies, constitute an axis of evil, arming to threaten the peace of the world.<sup>65</sup>

Thus President Bush blended together North Korea, Iran and Iraq as dangerous enemies of the US and referred to Iran as a member of “axis of evil”. The bombastic rhetoric of President Bush’s “axis of evil” speech established one fact that Iran was associated with Washington’s so-called “War on Terror”. Therefore, the country should not be treated as a potential partner in the “War on Terror,” rather it should be included in the war itself, although it assisted the US in Afghanistan. In this way, the US showed ungratefulness of highest order to Iran whose help was crucial in removing the Taliban regime in Afghanistan. Thus Bush’s inclusion of Iran among the three countries he infamously described as the “axis of evil” removed any chance of future Iran-US rapprochement.<sup>66</sup> It goes without saying that the words of threat, presented as the “axis of evil” speech by President Bush on an international stage not only led to “more unity and solidarity among the Iranian nation”, but also marked a decline in the reformist’s support for improved Iran-US relations. A noted analyst has observed that Bush’s “axis of evil” speech came as a surprise, sudden shockwave to the Iranians since it came after a period of Iranian overtures to the US and Tehran’s vital help in Afghanistan. They saw it as betrayal of their goodwill and felt like jilted lovers. They felt that the US could not be trusted anymore and from then on, it became unpatriotic to advocate Iran’s relations with the US. According to Jahangir Amuzegar, Iran’s former Finance Minister under the Shah, the Iranian government officials dismissed Bush’s accusation as another manifestation of the US *estekbar-e jahani* or ‘global arrogance’ while many Iranian took the “axis of evil” harangue “as a deep insult to their national dignity.”<sup>67</sup> As a result, the militant language of Bush’s tough and threatening message of “axis of evil” gave Iran no other option but to respond with similar hostility. While the Supreme Leader Ayatullah Khamenei was seen to say that Iran’s problem was that it had an enemy who was always after a new excuse (*Doshman e Bahaneh Jou*).<sup>68</sup> In this way, Bush’s infamous “axis of evil” speech shut the door of dialogue between Iran and the US and helped a lot to engulf the already estranged Iran-US relations.

**(c) Iraq: The Double-Edged Sword for the US, while Iran Scored only US Blame**

As stated above, in the wake of the removal of Iraq’s Saddam Hussein the Bush administration adopted a tactic of blaming Iran for aiding and harbouring al-Qaeda leaders and the US blame game intensified when it faced growing difficulties in Iraq in post-Saddam era.<sup>69</sup> It was the time when the Bush administration was dreaming to attack Iran by accusing Tehran of creating problems for US troops in Iraq. But knowingly and intentionally the US ignored some basic facts<sup>70</sup> in which Iran had nothing to do with. Thus after the initial cooperation between Tehran and Washington over US Iraqi invasion in 2003, the US attitude began stiffening its position on Iran only when the war in Iraq proved more challenging and vicious than it had anticipated at the outset. As time proceeded, Iraq became a double-edged sword for the US as it saw growing Iran’s influence in Iraq while there was no clear sign of stability in the near future. Essentially,

the US-led invasion of Iraq removed Iran's nemesis Saddam Hussein and put in place a Shiite government more to its liking. Moreover, by toppling Iraqi President Saddam Hussein and disbanding the Iraqi Army and Saddam's ruling Baath Party, the US created a political and military vacuum ripe for exploitation by Iran. Analysts tend to believe that whatever the US achieved in the 2003 Iraq war, the fall of Saddam Hussein left Iran as a hegemon in the Persian Gulf region. Iran's such status was clearly the worst news for the US-Israel allies who have long sought to prevent Iran from establishing hegemony in the Persian Gulf following the end of the Cold War. Against this backdrop, when events in Iraq spiraled quickly out of US control, Washington only blamed that Iranian-trained and equipped Shiite militias filled power vacuums in southern Iraq and other Shiite areas of Baghdad.

US officials also complained that Iran and Hizbullah were teaching Iraqi Shiites members how to blow up the US and British troops with improvised explosive devices. They even complained that Iranian Revolutionary Guards led by a Shiite cleric, Mohammad Baqr al-Hakim (and after his assassination in August 2003, his brother Abdel Aziz) increased its influences in Iraq through the Supreme Council for the Islamic Revolution in Iraq (hereinafter SCIRI).<sup>71</sup> The US feared that the Iranian Revolutionary Guards seemed likely to have major influences in Iraq no matter with which Shiite politician or group consolidated power, whether the country remained united or fell apart. The US fear doubled when in December 2004 'Shia Crescent'<sup>72</sup>—a term floated by Jordan's King Abdullah II in reference to Iran's growing influence from Damascus to Tehran—gained ground. In fact, this terminology unnerved the policy-makers in Washington. The US saw Iran's growing influence was taking place at cost of the "slow bleed" of US influence and military power in Iraq. Consequently, the US placed all blames on Iran for political turmoil in Iraq and this trend of blaming Iran for difficulties in Iraq continued even after the Khatami presidency was over.

**(d) The US Regime Change Policy Assumed New Speed**

The factor that has been constantly affecting Iran's relation with the US as also elaborated previously is Washington's traditional regime change policy in Iran. Essentially, after the Bush's militant "axis of evil" speech no events (for example, Iran's assistance in the US war in Afghanistan, Khatami's grand bargain agenda etc.) could narrow down the estranged relations between Iran and the US. Taking this opportunity, Israel, the AIPAC and the neoconservatives in and out of the Bush administration strongly advocated for regime change in Iran which was left dysfunctional for some time during the last years of the Clinton administration. The Bush administration put forward a goal of turning the whole Middle East into forced democracy for building a Greater Middle East and thus reshaping the map of the Middle East under the Bush Doctrine was executing through the US aggressive hegemony.<sup>73</sup> In his attempt to export of democracy in the Middle East, President Bush expected that after the US victory in Iraq in 2003,

people of US enemy countries in the Middle East, specifically in Iran and Syria would rise against their ruling elites. Given this hope, the US began to flirt with the idea of a regime change in Iran.<sup>74</sup> Oddly enough, the Bush administration experienced its first setback when the people of Iran did not rise against the Islamic regime as President Bush expected. After failing to achieve its ultimate goal in Iran under the Bush Doctrine, the frustrated Bush administration was seen busy in working for a regime change in Iran in public by assisting anti-Iranian forces abroad and Washington waited to use any possible internal Iranian political struggles to its advantage.<sup>75</sup>

On this very ground Washington refused to cooperate Iran when the later sought US help regarding anti-Iranian terrorist group—MEK then stationing in Iraq offering the grand bargain proposal in May 2003. The US-based Human Rights Watch also criticized the organization for running prison camps in Iraq, and by others for being run as a cult under the dictatorial leadership of Masud and Mariam Rajavi. Despite this reality, the US government viewed the MEK as a possible vanguard to topple the clerical regime in Tehran and argued that the MEK had been a good source of intelligence on Iran, especially on its nuclear programme, and could in the future help it fight Iranian influence in Iraq. Finally, the US declared the MEK “protected people” under the Geneva Convention although it was still on the State Department’s terrorist list. The US government also let the MEK keep their weapons and ordered them to man checkpoints in southern Iraq alongside US troops. As the US decided working with the MEK, on May 19, 2003, anti-Iran Republican politician Samuel Dale Brownback introduced an amendment to the 2004 Foreign Relations Authorization Act authorizing \$50 million a year to aid Iranian opposition groups and activists. The amendment sought to create an Iran Democracy Foundation<sup>76</sup> that in turn would disperse \$50 million<sup>76</sup> to various Iranian opposition groups and satellites TV channels in the US.<sup>77</sup> However, nothing of US attempts worked as the MEK was and is intensely disliked by the Iranian population, largely because of their support for Iraq during the debilitating Iran-Iraq War. This time, they were seen as traitors by much of the Iranian public because they were being supported by the US.

The time when the Bush administration was working with the MEK for a regime change in Iran, it did not lower down its military threat to Iran for the same purpose. In order to justify military action in Iran, Washington even accused Tehran of harboring al-Qaeda leaders. The Bush administration had also a list of unsubstantiated and unproven accusations against Iran including Tehran’s attempt to develop nuclear weapons and Iranian involvement in past attacks against the US (for example, the 1996 Khobar Tower bombing). This volley of accusations was a pre-emptive justification for some political or military action against Iran for regime change.<sup>78</sup> Earlier in the first week of April 2003, a *Los Angeles Times* poll found 50% of Americans favouring “military action” against Iran if it “continues to develop nuclear weapons.”<sup>79</sup> This

actually provided the needed justification of extension of US war to Iran for regime change. Later on basking on the success in Iraq, in a press conference on July 30, 2003, President Bush accused Iran of giving the al-Qaeda leaders refuge.<sup>80</sup> President Bush became so much adamant to bring a regime change in Iran that a year later on July 17, 2004, he publicly hinted that although the CIA had found no direct connection between Iran and the attacks of September 11, nevertheless, he would continue to look and see if the Iranians were involved.<sup>81</sup> His February 2, 2005, State of the Union Address reflected this US position when the President described Iran as “the world’s primary state sponsor of terror,” accused it of “depriving its people of the freedom they seek and deserve” and finally warned Tehran along with Damascus that they were next in his sights in his declared mission to spread democracy around the world.<sup>82</sup> On another occasion he stated: “Today Iran is ruled by men who suppress liberty at home and spread terror across the world. Power is in the hands of unelected few who have retained power through an electoral process that ignores the basic requirements of democracy.”<sup>83</sup> It is not hard to understand that all these threatening statements were made in the direction of bringing a change in Iran’s Islamic regime. In response to Bush’s regime change threats, Iran’s Supreme Leader Ayatullah Ali Khamenei stated: “All US presidents since 1979 had sought to overthrow Iran’s ruling establishment, but failed one after the other.”<sup>84</sup> In this way, US regime change policy in Iran has been poisoning Iran-US relations.

### **Conclusion**

The man who took Iran from a state of global isolation to the state of international recognition was Iran’s reformist President Sayyid Mohammad Khatami. A keen political figure and the father of reform in post-Khomeini Iran, Khatami engaged all efforts to improve Iran’s relations with the West, the US in particular, and thus tried hard to integrate Iran into the international community to end Iran’s years-long isolationism through his pragmatic approach to foreign policy. Although under him Iran’s relations with the outside world improved substantially, Iran-US relations remained a hostage to a less extent internal politics of both Iran and the US but to a large degree the political complexities of US, the unrestricted influences of Israel, its lobby in the US—the AIPAC, the neoconservatives, US Arab allies on the US policymakers. Arguably, the Clinton administration’s failure to initiate high-level talks till 2000 and the Bush administration’s hardline and seeming initial indifference towards Iranian gestures contributed a lot to the failure of Iran-US rapprochement. In fact, influenced by the just-mentioned elements, the Bush administration paid hardly any attention to Khatami’s offer to negotiate a comprehensive settlement between Iran and the US, and officials in the US were ordered not to pursue it. As a consequence, the Khatami era (1997-2005) witnessed a history of a vain attempt of Iran-US rapprochement.

## Notes and References of Section II of Chapter 5

1. For detail on Khatami and his Dialogue among Civilizations see Ghoncheh Tazmini, *Khatami's Iran: The Islamic Republic and the Turbulent Path to Reform*, Tauris Academic Studies, London, 2009; Zhand Shakibi, *Khatami and Gorbachev: Politics of change in the Islamic Republic of Iran and the USSR*, Tauris Academic Studies, London, 2010.
2. Ghoncheh Tazmini, *Khatami's Iran: ...*, *op. cit.*, p. 55.
3. James A. Bill, 'Iran and the United States: ...', *op. cit.*, p. 46.
4. Anoushiravan Ehteshami and Mahjoob Zweiri (ed.), *Iran's Foreign Policy from Khatami to Ahmadinejad*, Ithaca Press, UK, 2008, pp. 9-10.
5. Fawaz A. Gerges, *America and Political Islam: ...*, *op. cit.*, pp. 138-140.
6. Rather than supporting the US policy towards Iran, since 1992 the European countries or the European Union announced its policy of engaging a dialogue with Iran which it defined as a "critical dialogue". It suggests that through diplomatic discussion and economic incentives Iran could be persuaded to modify its behavior, though it acknowledged Iran's right to acquire the means to defend itself.
7. R. K. Ramazani, 'The Emerging Arab-Iranian Rapprochement: Towards an Integrated U.S. Policy in the Middle East?', *Middle East Policy*, Vol. VI, No. 1, June 1998, pp. 54-58; John Felton, *The Contemporary Middle East: ...*, *op. cit.*, p. 395.
8. Fawaz A. Gerges, *America and Political Islam: ...*, *op. cit.*, p. 136.
9. Quoted in Barbara Slavin, *Bitter Friends, Bosom Enemies: ...*, *op. cit.*, p. 108.
10. Ghoncheh Tazmini, *Khatami's Iran: ...*, *op. cit.*, p. 83.
11. For example, because of the universality and acceptability of Khatami's theory, on November 4, 1998, the UN General Assembly proclaimed the year 2001 as the "United Nations Year of Dialogue among Civilizations."
12. Kenneth M. Pollack, *The Persian Puzzle: ...*, *op. cit.*, pp. 316-317.
13. John Felton, *The Contemporary Middle East: ...*, *op. cit.*, p. 395.
14. Quoted in John J. Mearsheimer and Stephen M. Walt, *The Israel Lobby and U.S. Foreign Policy*, *op. cit.*, pp. 290-291.
15. Trita Parsi, *Treacherous Alliance: ...*, *op. cit.*, pp. 204-205; Barbara Slavin, *Bitter Friends, Bosom Enemies: ...*, *op. cit.*, p. 10.
16. Shireen T. Hunter, *Iran's Foreign Policy in the post-Soviet Era: ...*, *op. cit.*, p. 54; Kenneth M. Pollack, *The Persian Puzzle: ...*, *op. cit.*, p. 315.
17. Kenneth M. Pollack, *The Persian Puzzle: ...*, *op. cit.*, p. 318; Joseph Kostiner, *Conflict and Cooperation in the Gulf Region*, *op. cit.*, p. 188.
18. Trita Parsi, *Treacherous Alliance: ...*, *op. cit.*, p. 213; Steven Wright, *The United States and Persian Gulf Security: ...*, *op. cit.*, pp. 114-115.
19. Since 1979 Iran and the US have remained arch rivals, however, for their engagements time and again for mutual interests they have been called bitter friends by Barbara Slavin. See her book: *Bitter Friends, Bosom Enemies: Iran, the U.S. and the Twisted Path to Confrontation*.
20. Barbara Slavin, *Bitter Friends, Bosom Enemies: ...*, *op. cit.*, pp. 11-12; Ali Ansari, *Confronting Iran: The Failure of American Foreign Policy and the Next Great Crisis in the Middle East*, Basic Books, New York, USA, 2006, p. 181; Alethia H. Cook and Jalil Roshandel, *The United States and Iran: Policy Challenges and Opportunities*, Palgrave Macmillan, New York, USA, 2009, p. 29.
21. Barbara Slavin, *Bitter Friends, Bosom Enemies: ...*, *op. cit.*, p. 11. See also: Barry Rubin, *The Tragedy of the Middle East*, The Cambridge University Press, New York, 2002, p. 134.
22. Born as the Afghan Services Bureau (*Maktab al Kiddimah*) better known as al-Qaeda, was a form of international political Islam that had developed in the wake of the Soviet defeat in Afghanistan. It was headed by Osama bin Laden (who had been killed by the US forces in 2011) and Ayman al-Zawahiri. The US had enlisted al-Qaeda as a terrorist organization in 1999.
23. Barbara Slavin, *Bitter Friends, Bosom Enemies: ...*, *op. cit.*, p. 90.
24. Established in 1997 by William Kristol and Robert as a non-profit educational organization, the PNAC was a neoconservative think tank based in Washington, D. C. that focused on US foreign policy and whose stated goal was "to promote American global leadership."
25. Roger Howard, *Iran Oil: op. cit.*, p. 23.
26. Roham Alvandi, 'Iranian-American Relations after September 11: Clash of Civilizations or Clash of Interests?', *Australian Quarterly*, vol. 74, no. 2, March-April 2002, p. 8.
27. Trita Parsi, *Treacherous Alliance: ...*, *op. cit.*, pp. 225-228; Kenneth M. Pollack, *The Persian Puzzle: ...*, *op. cit.*, p. 346.
28. Sasan Fayazmanesh, *The United States and Iran: ...*, *op. cit.*, p. 118.
29. John J. Mearsheimer and Stephen M. Walt, *op. cit.*, p. 292.
30. Roger Howard, *Iran Oil: op. cit.*, p. 149.

31. For example, Saddam's Iraq had links with al-Qaeda operators who were responsible for the 9/11 attacks, Saddam Hussein was developing WMD with a very poor human rights record etc.
32. For detail, see Gawdat Bahgat, *American Oil Diplomacy in the Persian Gulf and the Caspian*, University Press of Florida, USA, 2003, p. 1; Jonathan Cook, *Israel and the Clash of Civilizations: Iraq, Iran and the Plan to Remake the Middle East*, Pluto Press, London, 2008, pp. xi-xii, 9, 30-31; William Engdahl, *A Century of War: Anglo-American Oil Politics and the New World Order*, Pluto Press, London, 2004, p. 257; Stephen Kinzer, *Overthrow: America's Century of Regime Change from Hawaii to Iraq*, Times Books, USA, 2006; John S. Duffield, 'Oil and the Iraq War: How the United States could have expected to benefit, and might still', *The Middle East Review of International Affairs (MERIA)*, Vol. 9, no. 2, Article 7-June 2005, posted on: <http://meria.idc.ac.il/journal/2005/issue2/jv9no2a7.html> (Accessed on January 1, 2009)
33. To reshape the Middle East through an aggressive programme of democratization and thus exporting democracy in the region President Bush declared the Bush Doctrine. In essence, the Bush Doctrine gave the US the right to pre-emptive military strikes against countries it deemed terrorist. The Bush Doctrine had three identifiable pillars namely, a) prevent hostile states from acquiring unconventional weapons with unilateralism if necessary; b) promote democracy and freedom on a global basis; c) maintain the pre-eminence or hegemony of the US in the international system. However, the regional hegemonic power like Iran stood in the way of realization of the Bush Doctrine. See Steven Wright, *The United States and Persian Gulf Security: The Foundations of the War on Terror*, Ithaca Press, UK, 2007, p. 38; Noam Chomsky, *Failed States: The Abuse of Power and the Assault on Democracy*, op., cit. p. 7; Jonathan Cook, *Israel and the Clash of Civilizations: ...*, op., cit., p. 3.
34. Kenneth M. Pollack, *The Persian Puzzle: ...*, op., cit., pp. 354-355.
35. Barbara Slavin, *Bitter Friends, Bosom Enemies: ...*, op., cit., p. 4.
36. Shahram Chubin and Robert S Litwak, 'Debating Iran's Nuclear Aspiration', *The Washington Quarterly*, vol. 26, no. 4, Autumn 2003, p.102; Barbara Slavin, *Bitter Friends, Bosom Enemies: op., cit.*, pp. 10-11.
37. Scott Ritter, *Target Iran: ...*, op., cit., p. 150.
38. Barbara Slavin, *Bitter Friends, Bosom Enemies: ...*, Op., Cit., p. 109; Ray Takeyh, *Guardian of the Revolution: ...*, op., cit., p. 218; Trita Parsi, *Treacherous Alliance: ...*, op., cit., pp. 243-249.
39. Quoted in Shireen T. Hunter, *Iran's Foreign Policy in the post-Soviet Era: ...*, op., cit., p. 54.
40. Quoted in Fawaz A. Gerges, *America and Political Islam: ...*, op., cit., p. 136.
41. Track-two diplomacy is an unofficial policy discourse that is conducted outside of the public eye. While such discussions rarely create radical changes, they may pave the way for change to occur.
42. Shireen T. Hunter, *Iran's Foreign Policy in the post-Soviet Era: ...*, op., cit., pp. 54-55.
43. Hillary Rodham Clinton, *Hard Choices*, Simon & Schuster, UK, 2014, p. 419.
44. See Trita Parsi, *Treacherous Alliance: ...*, op., cit., pp. 205-206.
45. James A. Bill, 'Iran and the United States: ...', op., cit., p. 46; John Felton, *The Contemporary Middle East: ...*, op., cit., p. 396; Kenneth M. Pollack, *The Persian Puzzle: ...*, op., cit., pp. 322-323.
46. John Felton, op., cit., p. 396; Kenneth M. Pollack, *The Persian Puzzle: ...*, op., cit., p. 323.
47. "6+2" is a coalition of the six nations bordering with Afghanistan namely China, Iran, Pakistan, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan, plus the US and Russia.
48. John Felton, op., cit., p. 396.
49. Kenneth M. Pollack, *The Persian Puzzle: ...*, op., cit., pp. 339-340.
50. For her speech see: John Felton, op., cit., p. 396
51. Ghoncheh Tazmini, op., cit., p. 90. See also: Joseph Kostiner, *Conflict and Cooperatin in the Gulf Region*, op., cit., p. 188.
52. John Felton, op., cit., pp. 401-404.
53. Sasan Fayazmanesh, *The United States and Iran: ...*, op., cit., p. 94; Ghoncheh Tazmini, *Khatami's Iran: ...*, op., cit., pp. 90-91; Hillary Rodham Clinton, *Hard Choices*, op., cit., p. 419.
54. One important factor was Iran remained the most active state sponsor of terrorism in the State Department's annual report in 2000 for supporting Islamic groups like Hizbullah, HAMAS, and the Palestinian Islamic Jihad. Additionally, the US dual containment policy was still in place.
55. For US benign hegemony see: Shireen T. Hunter, *Iran's Foreign Policy in the Post-Soviet Era: ...*, op., cit., p. 4.
56. Op., cit., p. 10.
57. Trita Parsi, *Treacherous Alliance: ...*, op., cit., p. 231.
58. For more about Israeli involvement in the issue see: Trita Parsi, *Treacherous Alliance: ...*, op., cit., pp. 219-234; William O. Beeman, *The "Great Satan" VS. The "Mad Mullahs": ...*, op., cit., p. 144.
59. Gawdat Bahgat, *American Oil Diplomacy in the Persian Gulf and the Caspian*, op., cit., p. 125.
60. Barbara Slavin, *Bitter Friends, Bosom Enemies: ...*, op., cit., p. 91.
61. William O. Beeman, *The "Great Satan" VS. The "Mad Mullahs": ...*, op., cit., pp. 143-144.
62. Trita Parsi, *Treacherous Alliance: ...*, op., cit., pp. 231-234.

63. Sasan Fayazmanesh, *The United States and Iran: ... , op., cit.*, pp. 110-111. See also Trita Parsi, *Treacherous Alliance: ... , op., cit.* pp. 230-234.
64. Barbara Slavin, *Bitter Friends, Bosom Enemies: ... , op., cit.*, p. 12.
65. "The President's State of the Union Address," The United States Capitol, Washington, DC, January 29, 2002, available at: <http://georgewbush-whitehouse.archives.gov/news/releases/2002/01/20020129-11.html> (accessed on May 14, 2014).
66. Kasra Naji, *Ahmadinejad: The Secret History of Iran's Radical Leader*, I.B. Tauris, UK, 2008, p.190.
67. Jahangir Amuzegar, 'Iran's Crumbling Revolution', *Foreign Affairs*, January/February 2003, p. 46; Zhand Shakibi, *Khatami and Gorbachev: ... , op., cit.*, 350.
68. Shireen T. Hunter, *Iran's Foreign Policy in the Post-Soviet Era: ... , op., cit.*, p. 61; Barbara Slavin, *Bitter Friends, Bosom Enemies: ... , op., cit.*, p. 12.
69. William O. Beeman, *The "Great Satan" VS. The "Mad Mullahs": ... , op., cit.*, p. 148.
70. Firstly, the Iraqi insurgents were Sunni and anti-Iran and were helped by Arab countries, including US allies Saudi Arabia, Jordan, and Egypt, and Arab volunteers came to Iraq through Syria. Secondly, the overwhelming majority of those killed in Iraq after the fall Saddam Hussein were Shias. Thirdly, more Americans were killed by Sunnis rather than by Shias. Fourthly, Shia radical groups, such as Muqtada Al Sadr's Mahdi Army, were not Iran's main Shia allies in Iraq, who were under the leadership of Ayatullah Hakim. Shireen T. Hunter, *Iran's Foreign Policy in the Post-Soviet Era: ... , op., cit.*, p. 67.
71. SCIRI is a group comprised of Iraqi Shiites who had opposed Saddam's regime and fled to Iran at the beginning of the Iran-Iraq War.
72. The Shia crescent is the notionally crescent-shaped region of the Middle East where the majority population is Shia or where there is a strong Shia minority in the population. The US unnerved when King Abdullah II stated: "If pro-Iran parties or politicians dominate the new Iraqi government, a new 'crescent' of dominant Shia movements or governments stretching from Iran into Iraq, Syria and Lebanon could emerge, alter the traditional balance of power between the two main Islamic sects and pose new challenges to US interests and allies." See Anoush Ehteshami and Mahjoob Zweiri, *Iran and the Rise of its Neoconservatives: ... , op., cit.*, p. 133.
73. For more reasons, see Scott Ritter, *Target Iran: ... , op., cit.*, pp. XXI-XXV; Kasra Naji, *Ahmadinejad: ... , op., cit.*, p. 190; *The Christian Science Monitor*, February 8, 2002, available at: <https://www.questia.com/read/1P2-32593673/us-drawing-a-hard-fast-line-around-iran-war-on>
74. William O. Beeman, *The "Great Satan" VS. The "Mad Mullahs": ... , op., cit.*, p. 133.
75. Zhand Shakibi, *Khatami and Gorbachev: ... , op., cit.*, 319.
76. The Iran Democracy Foundation (later Act) was backed not only by Iranian exiles but also by AIPAC, JINSA and the Coalition for Democracy in Iran, whose founders included Morris Amirtay of JINSA and Michael Ledeen of AEI.
77. Trita Parsi, *Treacherous Alliance: ... , op., cit.*, pp. 245, 253-254; Shireen T. Hunter, *Iran's Foreign Policy in the Post-Soviet Era: ... , op., cit.*, pp. 62, 67.
78. William O. Beeman, *The "Great Satan" VS. The "Mad Mullahs": ... , op., cit.*, pp. 87-88.
79. *Op., cit.*, p. 134.
80. "The President's News Conference", July 30, 2003, *The American Presidency Project*, <http://www.presidency.ucsb.edu/ws/index.php?pid=63289>
81. William O. Beeman, *The "Great Satan" VS. The "Mad Mullahs": ... , op., cit.*, p. 209.
82. President George W. Bush, State of the Union Address, February 2, 2005, available at: <http://georgewbush-whitehouse.archives.gov/stateoftheunion/2005/>
83. Barbara Slavin, *Bitter Friends, Bosom Enemies: ... , op., cit.*, pp. 79-80.
84. "Khamenei condemns Bush address," *Guardian*, February 3, 2005, available at: <http://www.theguardian.com/world/2005/feb/03/iran.usa1> . Khamenei described the US as one of the big heads of a seven-headed dragon while he said Bush was the fifth US president sought to uproot the Iranian nation and the Islamic Republic of Iran following Carter, Reagan, George H. W. Bush and Clinton; however, all failed.



## Section III

### Iran-US Relations Since 2005

#### Introduction

As elaborated in the previous section, the neoconservatives who by now turned to be confrontationalists in Washington put an unmovable barrier to Iran-US rapprochement during the first term of Bush presidency. As a result, another difficult and tensed chapter of Iran-US relations with some contradictory dimensions opened during the second term of the Bush administration that began in 2005. Essentially, with no seeming change in the US policy toward Iran during the Khatami era, the conservatives in Iran consolidated their positions and elected conservative hard-liner Mahmoud Ahmadinejad their President (2005-2013). However, as time progressed, Iran and the US are seen to engage themselves under current Iranian President Hassan Rouhani (2013- ) which produced the historic nuclear deal in July 2015. This section will critically review the history of Iran-US relations since 2005 under following three main headings:

- A. Iran-US Relations during the Ahmadinejad Presidency (2005-2013)**
- B. Iran-US Relations in the Perspective of Iran's Nuclear Programme**
- C. Iran-US Relations during the Rouhani Years (2013- )**

#### **A. Iran-US Relations during the Ahmadinejad Presidency (2005-2013)**

##### **I. US-Israeli Propaganda against Ahmadinejad**

Immediately after the June 2005 Presidential Election in Iran and before Mahmoud Ahmadinejad had been declared the official winner of the election, he was purposefully attacked by the US government and supporters of the Bush administration,<sup>1</sup> which hugely shaped the mindset of Ahmadinejad towards the US-Israeli allies. Chiefly influenced by Israeli sources, on June 30, 2005, *The Washington Times* wrote that “Americans held in the 1979 seizure of the U.S. Embassy in Iran said yesterday they clearly recall Iranian President-elect Mahmoud Ahmadinejad playing a central role in the takeover, interrogating captives and demanding harsher treatment for the hostages.” The report quoted one former hostage as saying: “As soon as I saw his picture in the paper, I knew that was the bastard.”<sup>2</sup> Although a month later the US government notified that analysis had concluded a hostage-taker pictured in an old photo at the US Embassy in Tehran was not Iranian President-elect Mahmoud Ahmadinejad, however, the damage was done. The anti-Ahmadinejad propaganda by US-Israeli allies tremendously influenced the new President's mindset. Meanwhile, when Ahmadinejad had been declared the victor in the Presidential Election, the pro-Israeli neoconservatives in the Bush administration denounced him as the candidate of the Supreme Leader Ayatullah Khamenei and claimed that the election was fixed by the clergy despite evidence to the contrary. William O. Beeman who

visited Iran during the 2005 Presidential Election has expressly stated that “in my observation of the election, there is no doubt that Mr. Ahmadinejad had genuine support.”<sup>3</sup> Yet, the Bush administration tried to demonize Ahmadinejad. Beeman has finally concluded “Clearly, Iran was to be demonized, whoever won.”<sup>4</sup>

## **II. An Enraged Ahmadinejad Exploded the First Verbal Bomb against the US**

In the midst of anti-Ahmadinejad propaganda by US-Israeli allies, Mahmoud Ahmadinejad assumed office and hurled the first verbal bomb by declaring that his government would restore the values of the early period of the Islamic Revolution both domestically and internationally. According to Shireen T. Hunter, internationally this meant the adoption of a confrontational tone in relations with the West, especially the US, the courting of socialist governments, such as those in Latin America, and resumption of a more active approach toward the Arab-Israeli conflict, through more verbal support for groups such as HAMAS and attacks on US Middle East ally Israel.<sup>5</sup> Accordingly, in his first press conference as President, Ahmadinejad said: “Our nation has no significant need for the United States.” Some seven months later Ahmadinejad in his first interview with a US newspaper (*USA Today*) correspondent named Barbara Slavin who later became the author of the book *Bitter Friends, Bosom Enemies: Iran, the U.S., and the twisted path to confrontation*, Ahmadinejad expressed his views in this way: “We have in this world six billion people. It’s not an American club. [The US thinks] “that no one can live without them and this is a wrong notion. We have proved we can live without them.”<sup>6</sup> Reportedly, the initial US-Israeli false propaganda against Ahmadinejad, the US support for Iraq during the devastating Iran-Iraq War<sup>7</sup> and the failure of the reformists before him to reach out the US led him to harden his position toward the US. His hardline position and anti-US credential demonstrated once again when on September 17, 2005, delivered a speech at the UN General Assembly. In his speech, Ahmadinejad strongly defended Iran’s right to advance nuclear programme and enrich uranium, accused the US of hypocrisy and terrorist behavior, and questioned who was really responsible for the 9/11 terrorist attacks. He strongly criticized the US for its support lent to Saddam Hussein during the Iran-Iraq War and stated that both Saddam Hussein and Taliban of Afghanistan are the products of foreign [US] powers.<sup>8</sup>

## **III. A Change in Ahmadinejad’s US Policy: The Letter Diplomacy**

Like Ayatullah Imam Khomeini Iran’s President Ahmadinejad considered the US as the enemy of Islam as well as the enemy of the Third World nations who are aspirants of independence, prosperity and modernization. Therefore, he sought to build an international reputation by advocating Iran’s relations with developing nations and challenging the global primacy of the US. At the same time, Ahmadinejad also felt the need to engage with the US which shows that his anti-US political rhetoric did not sit with his real thinking. Barbara Slavin has stated that Ahmadinejad told her in an interview that Iran was not opposed to negotiations with the US if the

right—unspecified—conditions were met. He confidently hinted that Iran would be willing to negotiate with the US, but for talks to be successful, the Bush administration would have to give up its “arrogant” behaviour and accept Iran’s rightful place as a major power in the Persian Gulf.<sup>9</sup> In this way, Iran under Ahmadinejad’s first presidency indicated that it was ready to engage with the US. President Ahmadinejad’s willingness to open a dialogue with the US was indicated by his eighteen-page letter to US President George W. Bush (dated May 9, 2006) which was sent by the Swiss Ambassador in Tehran, Philippe Welti. This was the first public overture to an American President by an Iranian one since the 1979 Islamic Revolution. The letter listed the world’s ills, the unjust international system, the plight of the Palestinians, and the US role in them. This was followed by a call for the US to change its behavior and to adopt policies in line with the teachings of the Prophet Muhammad (pbuh). Ahmadinejad wrote that both he and Bush would have to answer to history and God for what they had done in office. As anticipated, President Bush did not answer to Ahmadinejad’s letter. Instead, he hardened his position on Iran and directed his actions and policies against the Islamic Republic of Iran. Although some argue that despite the clumsiness of the content, the letter offered an opening for further dialogue between the two hostile parties, and a response from Bush could have started a process that might have led to an improvement in Iran-US bilateral relations. However, Ahmadinejad concluded that Bush’s decision not to answer his letter was in itself an answer: the lack of answer was a sign of the Bush administration’s lack of interest in a dialogue with Iran. Ahmadinejad’s biographer Kasra Naji has stated that the non-response injured Ahmadinejad’s pride but soon he challenged President Bush to a live television debate, similar to those in US Presidential Elections, however, White House spokeswoman Dana Perino dismissed Ahmadinejad’s proposal.<sup>10</sup>

#### **IV. New Tensions over the Tehran Conferences on “The World without Zionism” and “Holocaust”**

Presumably, learning from the past experience that even after softening Iran’s position toward Israel nothing positive was achieved during the Khatami era, President Ahmadinejad took hardline on Israel.<sup>11</sup> Ahmadinejad’s hardline position on Israel which increased over time and intensified Iran-US tensions was first demonstrated on October 26, 2005, when he arranged a conference in Tehran entitled “The World Without Zionism.” In the conference, Ahmadinejad dropped a rhetorical bombshell by severely criticizing US foreign policy and its support for Israel. Quoting Ayatullah Imam Khomeini, Ahmadinejad said: “Our dear Imam [Ayatullah Khomeini] stated that this Quds [Jerusalem] occupying regime must disappear from the page of time.”<sup>12</sup> Ahmadinejad’s speech gave new ammunition to the hands of Israel and its allies in the US. They were quick to translate the comment in such a way that it became a proof that Iran under Ahmadinejad was an existential threat to Israel. Ahmadinejad’s statement was translated as “Israel must be wiped off the map,”<sup>13</sup> which is not accurate.<sup>14</sup> However, the media in Israel and

in the US purposefully milked Ahmadinejad's statements by inaccurate translation and thus added more tensions to Iran-US relations. More tension was added to the prevailed ones between Iran and the US when in subsequent speeches Ahmadinejad said that the Holocaust was a myth fabricated to justify the creation of the state of Israel. In a speech on Revolution Day on February 11, 2006, Ahmadinejad stated: "Western governments and the Great Satan can accept insults to the prophets but it's not legal to talk about the Holocaust. They use this [the Holocaust] to justify what they do to the Palestinians. They are the hostages of Zionism."<sup>15</sup> The US, Israel and their allies took it as Iran's denial of the Nazi murder of six million Jews, which only antagonized the Americans towards Iranian Islamic leaders. More troubles were added to Iran-US relations when in December 2006, Ahmadinejad hosted an international conference in Tehran of Holocaust deniers<sup>16</sup> and declared: "The Zionist regime will disappear soon, the same way the Soviet Union disappeared."<sup>17</sup>

#### **V. Heading towards Confrontation and the Proxy War in Lebanon**

The increased tensions between Iran and the US over the issues mentioned above deteriorated Iran-US relations a lot. Additionally, Iran's nuclear programme (examined below) and its growing influence among the Islamist groups of Palestine (such as HAMAS) and Lebanon's Hizbullah (whom US-Israel allies and other Western nations US designated terrorist organizations) created a situation for which both countries were heading towards a military confrontation. Particularly, following two visits to Iran by HAMAS's political chief Khaled Meshal in December 2005 and in early 2006 by the newly elected HAMAS government relations between Tehran and HAMAS reached a new height and from 2006 onwards, Iran's Islamic regime was seen on Israel's doorstep, a development that the US-Israel allies were not in a position to accept. Iran-US relations became more tensed when in October 2006, President Ahmadinejad in his speech at the "World without Zionism" disparagingly denounced attempts to normalize relations with Israel by some Muslim states and condemned all Muslim leaders who had accepted the existence of Israel as 'acknowledging a surrender and defeat of the Islamic world'. Ahmadinejad strongly castigated not only Egypt, Jordan and Turkey who had diplomatic relations with Israel, but also made a discreet attack on some Muslim countries such as Qatar, Bahrain and Pakistan which had taken steps towards improving relations with the Jewish state. These verbal Iranian attacks on Muslim states, who have relations with Israel and who were moving to improve relations with Tel Aviv, together with just-mentioned factors made Iran a potential enemy to the US-Israel allies who now impatiently and avowedly sought to attack Iran militarily.<sup>18</sup>

Although the US-Israeli allies showed their firm determination to attack Iran militarily, eventually the US was seen to engage in a proxy war with Iran to defuse the Israeli anger at Iran. Reportedly, the proxy war staged in which US proxy Israel attacked Iran's proxy Hizbullah in

Lebanon to ascertain the power and influence of Iran. With the US consent, Israel started the proxy war on July 12, 2006, following Hizbullah's summer 2006 raid into Israel which killed 8 Israeli soldiers and captured 2. It is generally understood in the US that the Iranian Revolutionary Guards provided thousands of rockets, medium-range missiles, anti-tank weapons, and a ground-to-sea rocket to Hizbullah, which the group used against Israel during the war.<sup>19</sup> On the other hand, during the 34-day-long proxy war in Lebanon, the US lent Israel its full blessing and helped Israel prosecute and continue the war in Lebanon for more than one month to weaken Iran by attacking its proxy—Hizbullah. Hoping for a quick victory over Iran-supported Hizbullah and thus to advance Bush Doctrine in Lebanon, Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice referred to the war as the “birth pangs of a new Middle East”. On his part President Bush, instead of condemning Israeli air strikes on civilian infrastructure, cheered Israeli aggression in Lebanon. Not only that the President used US influence at the United Nations to block an early cease-fire. Given such US position, Iran justifiably viewed this was more than a proxy war. The Iranian fear was that the US and Israel were thus paving the way for a military confrontation with Iran by first taking out Hizbullah—Iran's first line of defense.<sup>20</sup> However, in the war, the US-Israeli allies failed to achieve their desired goal (to defeat Iran's proxy and thus weaken Iranian influence in the region) but got clear message regarding Iran's influence in the region and its military might. After this failure, the US was seen to lower its threatening rhetoric and it moved to explore diplomatic pressure on Iran to contain the country. Subsequently, the US went to impose two harsher sanctions on Iran between July 31, 2006 and December 23, 2006.

#### **VI. US in the Quagmire of Iraq: An Enduring Legacy on Iran-US Relations**

As noted in the previous section that with US rejection of Khatami's grand bargain offer in 2003, the prospect for the improvement of Iran-US relations disappeared. Yet, Iran continued to assist the US in post-Saddam Iraq to see a stable Iraq because leaders in Tehran knew well that an unstable Iraq only prolonged US presence there which was a security threat for the Islamic Republic. At same time, Iran's growing influence in Iraq became a fact which produced much concern to the US and its allies in the region, most notably Israel and Saudi Arabia. The January 2005 election in Iraq, first free election in history, consolidated the political presence of pro-Iranian Iraqi Shia (and Kurds) at the centre of power in that country, which had previously been dominated by the Saddam-led Sunni alliance. Analysts view that as a direct consequence of the changing political map of Iraq, by 2005, Iran was, more emphatically than at any time since the founding of modern Iraq, a closer partner of the new Iraqi political establishment which soon became a source of confrontation with the West, the US in particular.<sup>21</sup>

In this context, Iran-Iraq ties were developing so closely that in early 2005, on an official visit to Tehran Iraqi Minister of Defense and his Iranian counterpart announced “a new chapter” in their relations, including cross-border military cooperation and Iranian help with training and

upgrading Iraq's armed forces, displacing US-Coalition advisers, a move that clearly took the US by surprise. The Iraqi minister even dismissed US concerns about Iranian meddling in the region, saying categorically: "Nobody can dictate to Iraq its relations with other countries."<sup>22</sup> Then on July 9, 2005, a deal was sealed in Tehran by the Iraqi Oil Minister Ibrahim Bahr al-Ulum and his Iranian counterpart Bijan Namdar Zanganeh. Under the terms of the deal, three new pipelines would be built to deliver Iraqi crude oil to Iranian refineries in return for deliveries of gasoline, heating oil and kerosene to Iraq. Experts argued such an agreement threatened US interests in the region essentially because any Iraqi dependency on US enemy country's resources easily led to the establishment of a much wider political relationship which the US never wanted. In October 2005, despite Anglo-US continuous accusations, the Iraqi President Jalal Talabain squarely played down the allegations of Iranian involvement in Iraq. The story did not end there. The growing ties between Iran and Iraq took new turn when posters of Khomeini—the most hated man in the US (for his derogatory calling of America, the Great Satan and its Middle East ally Israel, the Little Satan)—were plastered along streets and even at the provincial government center in Iraq.<sup>23</sup>

The US not only watched this growing intimacy between Iran and Iraq doubtfully and alarmingly, but also placed blame on Iran for Iraqi instability although Iran was not the real culprit for the allegation. The US accelerated its anti-Iran blame game as the US-led military operations in Iraq did not result in quick and resounding victory in terms of stability as promised by the proponents and other warlords in the US and in Israel. What is more, the Iraq war did not lead to the breaking out of the so-called democratic revolutions in the rest of the Middle East as the Bush Doctrine envisioned. Given, when Iraq plunged into total political turmoil and economic chaos and as a result, US casualties grew, Iran was blamed for everything. Scholarly observer Shireen T. Hunter has noted that the US tactic of blaming Iran for creating difficulties in Iraq continued, but it spared the Sunni Arab countries particularly Saudi Arabia, Jordan and Egypt and Iraqi Sunni insurgents from US accusations although they were the real culprits who were responsible for more than 90% of US casualties in Iraq and who thus kept sabotaging US efforts in Iraq with impunity.<sup>24</sup>

Despite these accusations and counter accusations, the Ahmadinejad government backed by the Supreme Leader Ali Khamenei showed willingness to engage with the US on Iraq. To some, in spite of Ahmadinejad's strong anti-Israeli and anti-US rhetoric, "he also had a burning ambition to be the man who ended the long-running hostilities with the US".<sup>25</sup> For that he wanted talks. But the Bush administration was not willing to engage with Iran in the fear that engagement would give Iran recognition while the country would be treated as an equal partner during the talks. Instead, desperate to hold on to US regional hegemony, President Bush "signaled that Iran would be confronted and isolated even more aggressively by the United States through the

creation of an anti-Iran alliance consisting of Arab states and Israel.”<sup>26</sup> It is also said that it was Israel and its lobby group in the US undermined the recommendations of the Iraq Study Group<sup>27</sup> that Bush negotiate and talk with Iran.<sup>28</sup> If there were no influences from Israel and its lobby—the AIPAC, the US would almost certainly have a different and more effective Iran policy during the Bush presidency. Shireen T. Hunter’s analysis of the situation is worth quoting. She has observed: “Had the United States approached talks with Iran on Iraq seriously, it might have helped resolve other problems, too.”<sup>29</sup> In that case there would have been a different course of Iran-US relations.

## **VII. US Policy of Regime Change**

US policy of regime change in Iran got a new momentum since 2003 because neoconservatives in academic and policymaking establishments including Patrick Clawson, deputy director at the Washington Institute for Near East Policy, US Vice President Dick Cheney and others strongly favored the policy. In 2005, Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice classified Iran under a group of nations that she called “outposts of tyranny”. Then President Bush took the lead and reinforced this Iranian picture of tyranny and oppression in an address at the National Defence University, where he said: “The Iranian regime should listen to the concerns of the world, and listen to the voice of the Iranian people, who long for their liberty and want their country to be a respected member of the international community. We look forward to the day when Iran joins in the hopeful changes taking place across the region. We look forward to the day when the Iranian people are free.”<sup>30</sup> In this way, the tone of the Bush administration rose to the level of dictation regarding Iranian government and arguing that the Iranian people were not free just because of their leaders, it hinted at serving as a liberator. Later in his January 2006 press conference President Bush said the US would support freedom movements all around the world and his administration would “work with groups that demand for people to be given the natural rights of men and women, and that right is to live in a free society”.<sup>31</sup> In mid-February 2006, Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice asked the Congress to provide \$75 million in emergency fund regime change and push for “democracy” in Iran. This was in addition to \$10 million already appropriate for that purpose.

According to Scott Ritter, this time around, the US was committed to a policy of regime change in Iran, and was using Iran’s nuclear programme as a smokescreen to facilitate it. To execute the plan, in a not-so-veiled threat that more than hinted of regime change, President Bush said his administration was providing more than \$75 million in 2006 “to promote openness and freedom for the Iranian people.”<sup>32</sup> In the background, however, the Bush administration was still beating the war drum against Iran despite opposition from Washington’s European allies.<sup>33</sup> The constant beating of war drums against Iran also had its desired effects on US public opinion. A Gallup poll reported in late February 2006, that “Iran has replaced Iraq as the country Americans (31%

Americans gave the nod to Iran as the worst enemy) consider to be their greatest enemy.”<sup>34</sup> Meanwhile, after a humiliating failure in the 2006 proxy war in Lebanon, the Bush administration dramatically increased its funding of pro-west democracy groups, as well as worked with Israel to increase the level of anti-regime broadcasts into Iran. In 2007, the Bush administration provided another \$420 million for operations to destabilize Iran and to bring about regime change there. Reportedly, some of the money was spent to buy the support of separatist groups like Kurdish Pejak and the Baluchi Jund Ullah.

Historians are of the view that Iran-US relations witnessed a more hostile course during the Bush administration. During the last years of his office when President Bush was on a tour in the Middle East in early 2008, President Bush visited Riyadh, Abu Dhabi and other places and called Iran a threat to global security. At one point, the US even justified its plan to establish a missile shield in Central Europe in terms of the Iranian threat.<sup>35</sup> However, noticing the Iranian willingness to talk with the US, in a surprising move, in May 2008, the former US president Jimmy Carter has criticized the Bush administration for not engaging with Iran and called for his country to resume trade relations with Iran, which he described as a “rational” nation. Carter also suggested the US should provide nuclear power technology and fuel to Iran as a show of goodwill.<sup>36</sup> However, the warmonger President Bush continued to beat the war drum against Iran until his last day in office, and when he left the office in December 2008, he left behind a negative legacy of Iran-US confrontational relations because of his repeated rhetoric of military threat against Iran.

### **VIII. The Obama Administration and an Uneven Path to Engagement**

#### **a. Initial Hopes for Engagement: The Return to Letter Diplomacy**

A change in the course of Iran-US relations became evident with the coming of Barack Obama administration in January 2009, the Islamic Republic of Iran began showing its full preparedness to talk with the US. It is said that when President Barack Obama came to power, Iran’s hard-line President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad gave approval of the secret talks with the initiative of Sultan Qabus of Oman.<sup>37</sup> Conversely, after the devastating results of 2006 proxy war in Lebanon, US aggressive policy of regime change in Iran lost its appeal and many in the US saw engagement was the best option.<sup>38</sup> It is pertinent to state that regarding a negotiated solution former director of the IAEA Hans Blix (1981-1997) once said only a US willingness to take regime change off the table and seek normal relations with Iran based on mutual trust would convince Iran not to seek nuclear weapons.<sup>39</sup> In fact, it was in this context, Barack Obama was elected US President and Iran’s political leaders hoped that the new US President might be more forthcoming. Hence, Iran’s President Ahmadinejad sent a congratulatory letter to Obama on the occasion of his Presidential victory. In the letter Ahmadinejad expressed the hope that the new US President would make meaningful changes in US foreign policy. Although Ahmadinejad’s letter went



unanswered, however, Obama sent a letter to Iran's Supreme Leader Ali Khamenei which the Guardian Council revealed later in May, 2009. This was one of President Barack Obama's first gestures in which he offered a new diplomatic opening. He also recorded video messages to greet the Iranian people on the occasion of the Persian New Year (Nowruz) on March 20, 2009.<sup>40</sup> In the message, Obama also said that US extended a hand to Iran, provided that the Iranians "unclenched their fist." The rest of the message consisted of a list of Iran's sins and US conditions for better relations, including the phrase that, in exchange for an extended hand, Iran must accept some "real responsibilities." A year ago he became the first US leader for decades to reach out directly to Iran's people and government, offering a "new beginning" in Iran-US relations. Experts view the most aspect of Obama's message was that it was addressed to the people and leaders of the Islamic Republic of Iran. This meant that he did not seek regime change in Iran and was only seeking a change in Iran's behavior.

#### **b. The Roxana Affair**

There were other signs of optimism that a change in Iran-US relations was undergoing. On January 31, 2009, only one week into the Obama administration, an episode relating to an American journalist of Iranian-Japanese descent by the name of Roxana Saberi caused some irritations to Washington. The Iranian authority arrested Roxana Saberi who worked for the BBC, NPR, and FOX News on charge of espionage and condemned her to an eight-year prison term. Both US President Obama and Secretary of State Hillary Clinton had called for her release, and in an interesting move to US request, President Ahmadinejad interfered and Roxana's case was examined in an appeals court, where her sentence was reduced and she was able to leave Iran in May 2009.<sup>41</sup> Ahmadinejad's intervention to reduce Roxana's sentence and free her could be widely read as an indication of Iran's desire to explore engagement with the US. However, Israel, US Arab allies and some key Obama administration officials, notably Secretary of State Hillary Clinton and Dennis Ross, special envoy for Iran and the Persian Gulf, successfully reduced the US diplomatic option to an exercise in futility and served as a prelude to "crippling" and harsher sanctions.<sup>42</sup>

#### **c. The 2009 Iranian Presidential Election and the So-called Green Movement**

Meanwhile, when Iran's Presidential election was scheduled in June 2009, the Obama administration preferred dealing with Iran's new President other than Ahmadinejad preferably, someone with less anti-US and anti-Israeli credential. US hopes augmented when Iranian reformists showed determination in challenging Ahmadinejad in the election. Against this backdrop, the US government took some modest steps and declared that it would join the P5+1 talks with Iran.<sup>43</sup> It also instructed American Embassy abroad to invite Iranian diplomats to the celebrations of the American War of Independence on July 4, 2009. However, post-election developments in Iran derailed this US positive trend and once again the US hardened its position

on Iran. Following the official declaration that Ahmadinejad had won the election, the reformist Presidential candidate Mir Hussein Mussavi led a massive protest movement which lasted for more than a week and this resulted in the killing of 7 to 15 people and injuring many. The US watched the Iranian post-election developments with much concern. In a sign of its utmost displeasure with the Iranian government for harsh treatment with the protesters, the US government withdrew its invitation to Iranian diplomats for the 4<sup>th</sup> July celebrations arguing that under Iran's current condition the presence of representatives of the Iranian government in an event that celebrates American values would be incongruous.<sup>44</sup> In view of the seriousness of the protest movement, the Supreme Leader Ayatullah Ali Khamenei accused the US of making a plot to create a "velvet revolution" in Iran, and in a bold and blunt speech, he said that the Iranian government would not tolerate lawlessness and would not succumb to pressure.<sup>45</sup> The post-election protests continued even after the Supreme Leader's warning of stern action and they gained strength and became known as the so-called Green Movement for the very reason that Mousavi's supporters took to the streets wearing green dress.<sup>46</sup> As time went on, the US support for the so-called Green Movement became increasingly evident which displayed a fairly clear US involvement in Iranian post-election political crisis. The US government later decided to support the Green Movement openly. This was evident when the Obama administration stayed in constant contact with activists in Iran and made an emergency intervention to prevent Twitter from shutting down (on Iranian government's order) for maintenance, which would have deprived protesters of a key communications tool.<sup>47</sup> Such US behavior increased Iranian fear of regime change in the first year of the Obama Presidency.

#### **d. Iran-US Relations during the Second Term of President Ahmadinejad**

While uneasy relations continued between Iran and the US over the US support for the ongoing so-called Green Movement, Iranian authority in July 2009 detained three American hikers: Joshua Fattal, Sarah Shourd, and Shane Bauer who had crossed into Iran from Iraqi Kurdistan, on charge of espionage. The US expressed its deep concern over the issue. Oman's Sultan Qabus came to the aid of the US and facilitated the eventual release of the hikers. Following this event, the negotiating channel remained open between Iran and the US under Sultan Qabus. Taking this advantage, both Iran and the US met in Geneva on October 1, 2009 for talks over Iran's nuclear issue (see below). These were long-awaited talks between the two countries, however, like before they did not produce desired results since on June 9, 2010, the US moved to impose another round of sanction on Iran in response to Iran's retreat from negotiating process over its nuclear programme. Thus US efforts to isolate Iran politically and economically continued. As a counter move, Iran's President Ahmadinejad took a foreign policy course hostile to the US in which he visited several countries who are deemed enemies of the US including the Sudan, Zimbabwe, Brazil, Cuba, and Venezuela. In November 2009, during Ahamdinejad's state visit to Brazil,

Venezuela and Bolivia when these countries voiced support for Iran's right to a nuclear programme, Secretary of State Hillary Clinton warned that "countries such as Venezuela and Bolivia should "think twice" about the consequences of their ties with the Islamic Republic."<sup>48</sup> In the midst of these developments, in March 2010, on the eve of the Iranian New Year, President Obama greeted the Iranian people and renewed the dialogue offer. In late September 2010, in an exclusive interview with the BBC's Persian TV service correspondent Bakman Kalbassi, President Obama appreciated Iran's positive role in Afghanistan, however, he refuted Ahmadinejad's recent claim that most people believed the US government was behind the 9/11 attacks stating: "It was offensive. It was hateful."<sup>49</sup>

When President Obama was making such positive gestures and comments, some minor developments only prevented him from being open to Iran for a while. In late September 2011, the US government arrested an Iranian national at the airport in New York claiming that he had attempted to recruit a Mexican drug cartel to bomb a restaurant where the US Ambassador was known to eat. Incidentally the Mexican hit man turned out to be a US informant. Later the US government claimed that it had evidence suggesting the conspiracy was conceived, sponsored, and directed by senior officials in Iran. In early October 2011 the US also accused Iran of having plotted to assassinate Saudi Arabia's Ambassador to Washington D.C., and to have planned to detonate bombs at the embassies of both Saudi Arabia and Israel in the US capital. Iran strongly rejected the accusations.<sup>50</sup> In the midst of such US accusations, on December 4, 2011, Iranian armed forces had downed a US Lockheed Martin RQ-170 Sentinel unmanned aerial spy vehicle commonly known as drone (which was part of a CIA reconnaissance mission that involved both the intelligence community and military personnel stationed in Afghanistan) near Kashmar, some 225 kilometers from the border with Afghanistan. The US government initially denied the claims but later President Obama acknowledged that the downed aircraft was a US drone and requested that Iran return it. Iran did not return the actual drone, however, an Iranian company said it would send a full squadron of 12 miniature versions of drone (toy drone) to the White House for President Obama as a present. According to BBC security correspondent Frank Gardner, this was a long-term damage to US intelligence and Iran was now formally complained about the US intrusion into its airspace and asked for compensation.<sup>51</sup> On December 9, 2011, *The New York Times* reported that Iran submitted its complaint to the Security Council by its Ambassador to the UN Mohammad Khazaei, in which he denounced the sending of a US drone to Iranian territory as "the provocative and covert operations against the Islamic Republic of Iran by the U.S. government, which have increased and intensified in recent months."<sup>52</sup>

Throughout 2012, President Obama insisted that sanctions and diplomacy be given a chance, although Israel vainly tried to encourage him to start a war against Iran over its nuclear programme. Next year on the eve of Iran's New Year's celebration in March 2013, President

Obama in a video message greeted Iranian people and urged them to take “immediate and meaningful steps” to reduce tension with the international community. Regarding the nuclear programme Obama offered Iran a “practical solution” if it truly seeks peaceful nuclear capabilities rather than weapons. However, there was not significant headway of Iran-US engagement during the last months of Ahmadinejad’s presidency.

## **B. Iran-US Relations in the Perspective of Iran’s Nuclear Programme**

Now we turn to the most important field of Iran-US relations—Iran’s nuclear programme. Currently, the Islamic Republic of Iran’s decision to go with nuclear programme has become a major source of friction between Tehran and Washington. Although present Iranian authority claims that their actions are peaceful and means for research and civilian purposes, however, the US-Israel allies (and some US European allies) strongly doubt and view Iran’s nuclear programme aims at making nuclear weapons. The discussion that follows critically looks at the history of Iran’s nuclear programme and how it has become a constant issue of Iran-US hostile relations since 2002 because of the intriguing and pervasive role of militant Israel.

### **a. Iran’s Historic Nuclear Ambitions and the US**

There is no dispute that the US is responsible for Iran’s historic nuclear ambitions. Iran’s quest for nuclear programme began during the late 1950s when Tehran and Washington were enjoying close bilateral relations, the US encouraged Iran’s Shah to develop nuclear power. President Eisenhower who in 1953 launched an “atoms for peace” programme to promote nuclear energy in the developing world made the offer to Iran’s Shah who after the 1953 coup d’état became a strong reliable client of the US. Following this offer on March 5, 1957, Iran signed an agreement with the US “for cooperation in research on the peaceful uses of nuclear energy”, which went into force on April 27, 1959.<sup>53</sup> The same year, Iran established a Nuclear Research Centre at Tehran University and began negotiating with the US on the purchase of a 5 megawatt thermal research reactor for the centre. By taking the advantage of growing bilateral Iran-US relations the Shah purchased a pool-type five-megawatt research reactor from the US company—American Machine and Foundry in 1967. In 1968, Iran became among the first countries to sign and ratify the nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (hereinafter NPT). As time progressed, US cooperation with Iran in the latter’s nuclear field increased. Immediately after the historic visit of President Richard Nixon to Tehran in May 1972, Iran even began to talk of the need to develop nuclear power plants to produce electricity and to save its oil and gas reserves for industrial goals and exports. As part of this plan, in March 1974, the Shah established the Atomic Energy Organization of Iran (hereinafter AEOI) and announced a long-term development programme in this sector hoping to build 23 nuclear power plants to generate 23,000 megawatts of electricity throughout Iran by 1994. In May 1974, when Richard Nixon was still in office, the Chairman of the US Atomic Energy Commission traveled to Tehran to talk to Iranian officials about

establishing multinational uranium enrichment and reprocessing facilities in Iran. Around this time, hundreds of Iranians were sent to train as nuclear scientists and technicians in the finest universities of Europe and the US including the Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT).

Since Iran was a key ally in the Nixon's twin pillars strategy to contain Soviet expansion in the Middle East in addition to the safeguard of Persian Gulf oil and Israel, the Ford administration (1974-1977) continued to maintain his predecessor's special relations with Iran even by supplying of nuclear materials to Iran. For example, in early November 1974, during Kissinger's visit to Tehran agreements were made to sign contracts with the US for the supply of enriched uranium for six nuclear reactors, the construction of which was to be negotiated direct with US firms.<sup>54</sup> On March 3, 1975, Iran and the US signed a \$15 billion agreement for the construction of 8 nuclear power reactors having a total capacity of 8,000 megawatt electricity. Mohamed A. El-Khawas, professor of History and Political Science at the University of the District of Columbia, Washington, DC, has mentioned that according to the National Security Decision Memorandum 292 dated April 22, 1975, the Ford administration agreed to provide Iran "with material to be fabricated into fuel in Iran for use in its own reactors."<sup>55</sup> It also offered to sell Iran a reprocessing facility for extracting plutonium from nuclear reactor fuel. The Carter administration (1977-1981) outwardly pursued much the same policy of cooperation in the field of Iran's nuclear programme, but effectively limited US cooperation in the end. During his visit to Tehran on December 31, 1977 to celebrate the New Year, President Carter and the Shah concluded a new agreement according to which the US granted Iran "most favoured nation" status for spent fuel reprocessing. Next year on July 10, 1978, a Nuclear Energy Agreement was signed between Iran and the US in Tehran. This agreement was to facilitate cooperation in the field of nuclear energy and to govern the export and transfer of equipment and material to Iran.<sup>56</sup>

It is true, encouraged by US the Shah seriously pursued nuclear programme with the initial objective of nuclear energy as a means to buttress Iran's weak electric power infrastructure. As time progressed, the ambitious and megalomaniac Shah might have sought nuclear weapons chiefly to defeat Iran's regional adversaries (notably Iraq which purchased the Osirak nuclear research reactor from France in 1976), to deter global power (the Soviet Union) intervention and to cement Iran's leadership position within the Middle East. Israel's victories in the 1967 and 1973 wars against its Arab neighbors, Israeli possession of nuclear arms and India's nuclear experiment in May 1974 might have also influenced the ambitious Shah to pursue nuclear weapons. To that end, the Shah increased the budget of the AEOI from \$31 million to \$1 billion and Iran actively became involved worldwide nuclear firms of uranium enrichment as noted in section IV of chapter 3. The US saw this nervously and remained suspicious of the Shah's move. It was under such circumstance, the first director of the AEOI Dr. Akbar Etemad had to go to Washington in 1977 to meet Carter and to dispel the concerns of the US regarding the Shah's real

intention about the nuclear programme.<sup>57</sup> The US did not want to see nuclear weapons in the hands of Shah, who was no more a loyal client or partner of the US in the Persian Gulf region (examined in chapter 3). As the US lowered its dependence on Iran and thus lowered its cooperation in the field of Iran's nuclear programme, France or West Germany who managed to get the lion's share of the contracts in Iran's nuclear programme. Under a German Company work began on Iran's first nuclear power plant in 1978. When the work of the Bushehr power plant was 80% complete the 1979 Islamic Revolution left the Shah's nuclear programme unaccomplished.

**b. Iran's Nuclear Programme under Islamic Regime: The Beginning of US Open Hostility**

Following the 1979 Islamic Revolution, Ayatullah Imam Khomeini inherited Shah's nuclear programme. Given the hostile relationship between the Islamic revolutionary government and the US, Washington and its European allies ended all cooperation regarding nuclear science and technology transfer to Iran. The US also was happy to see that after the Shah's fall Ayatullah Imam Khomeini suspended nuclear programme for a number of reasons.<sup>58</sup> However, in a completely changed context, Iran restarted its suspended nuclear programme which caused much concern to the US. There is no denying that alongside the domestic energy needs, the most pressing reason for restarting of Iran's halted nuclear programme was military and the US was responsible in part for the restart. According to Kenneth M. Pollack, the Iran that the US must deal with today is, in many ways, the Iran created by its experiences in the 1980s, the decade which was the defining decade of Iran's modern history.<sup>59</sup> One practical aspect of this statement is that during the Iran-Iraq War Iran's isolation from international community was just because of US economic (1979) and arms (1984) embargoes. Another important aspect is that Iranians justifiably believed that emboldened and encouraged by the US, Iraq's Saddam Hussein not only started the devastating war but also used CW against the Iranians in the war. Factually, the first three or four years of the Iran-Iraq War shocked the Islamic leaders of Iran into realizing the value of modern military technology particularly, the sophisticated weapons that Iraq had used against the Iranians with open US assistance.

Khomeini's view regarding the continuation of the nuclear programme changed immediately after Iraq began using CW since 1983 against Iranian troops. Khomeini's Iran did not retaliate in kind since Khomeini vetoed the use of unconventional weapons as against the tenets of Islam, which forbids the killing of innocents, but the Iraqi use of CW and the US "seeing-and-hearing-no-evil" attitude to Saddam's crime, permanently changed the regime's view about the nuclear programme, which now actively and vigorously favored the restart of the programme. Thus the US-encouraged Iran-Iraq War changed the Iranian world view and made it clear to Iran's Islamic leadership that in any future conflict Iran would stand alone without the support from other nations.<sup>60</sup> After having decided to resume its nuclear programme, Iran successively asked the

German company Kraftwerk Union, and the French company Framatome to complete the Bushehr power plant which had been left abandoned since 1979 with its 80% work accomplished but by then seriously damaged by Iraqi bombing during the war. When the European companies refused to get involved in post-revolutionary Iran's nuclear programme because of US pressure, Iran turned to other potential suppliers of nuclear material such as Pakistan, Argentina, Spain, Czechoslovakia, China and Russia. Of them only China (in 1984, with Chinese assistance Iran opened a nuclear research centre in Isfahan) and Russia appeared as viable alternatives for Iran's nuclear assistance, but they both felt tremendous US pressure.

It is pertinent to state that since the development of a strong hostile relations between Iran and the US after 1979 Islamic Revolution, the US not only strictly stopped cooperating with Iran in the nuclear field, but also doggedly pursued a 'policy of denial' of Islamic Iran's nuclear programme by putting pressure on other countries not to transfer nuclear technology to Iran. Thus in the field of Iran's nuclear programme US policy stands: what was good for the Shah was not good for the Ayatullah Imam Khomeini.<sup>61</sup> Therefore, US open hostility towards Iran's nuclear programme became a fact. Meanwhile, upon Iranian request and motivated by its own economic interests Russia agreed to rebuild and complete the Bushehr plant. In early January 1995, Iran signed an \$800 million deal with Russia to that end. As Russia moved to complete the Bushehr project, both the US and Israel threatened Russia with punitive measures, however, Russia continued its nuclear cooperation with Iran that continues till date. Analysts have viewed that when the US could not sway its former Cold War rival—Russia—it began pressuring Iran and demanded an end to its nuclear programme. Iran, since restart of its nuclear programme in 1984, has been claiming that its nuclear programme is for peaceful purposes, while the US-Israeli allies remain suspicious about the real motive of the programme. In the early 1990s, US-Israeli allies suspected that nuclear scientist and father of Pakistan's nuclear bomb Dr. A. Q. Khan might have provided critical nuclear-related aid to Iran.

In actuality, after the Soviet collapse, as part of anti-Iranian Israeli propaganda, there were pretty-coloured reports that Iran had obtained nuclear warheads mounted on missiles from Kazakhstan. Other such reports claimed that China, India, Brazil, and Pakistan were helping Iran's nuclear programme, and that by 2000 or 2002 Iran would have nuclear weapons. These unfounded reports largely due to MEK-Israeli machination helped to harden the US position substantially on Iran's nuclear programme. As a consequence, preventing Iran from acquiring a nuclear-weapon capability became a cornerstone of the Clinton administration's Iran policy.<sup>62</sup> In face of US opposition to its nuclear programme, in 1992, Iran offered to allow the UN's nuclear watchdog agency—International Atomic Energy Agency (hereinafter IAEA) to have unrestricted access to all nuclear facilities in Iran. The IAEA examined all Iranian facilities and then declared that Iran's claim of the peaceful use of nuclear power was substantiated and there was no evidence of

any nuclear bomb programme in the country. European countries celebrated the news and agreed to reduce their sanctions and increase ties with Iran but influenced by Israel, the US refused to validate the report or change its stance with Iran.<sup>63</sup>

### **c. The 2002 Revelation of Iran's Secret Nuclear Activities and New Turn in Iran-US Hostility**

Despite the US and Israeli hue and cry over Iran's nuclear programme since early 1990s, Iran's nuclear programme did not become a major issue in its relations with the US and other Western countries until 2002. On August 14, 2002, Alireza Jafarzadeh<sup>64</sup>, a representative of an Iranian anti-regime group based outside Paris called the National Council of Resistance (hereinafter NCR)—the political wing of the terrorist organization, MEK—which has been still backing by the US government for a regime change in Iran, in a press conference at Willard Inter-Continental Hotel, in Washington DC declared that he had information that Iran was constructing one nuclear enrichment facility in Natanz (about 100 miles south of Tehran) and a heavy water reactor in Arak (about 150 miles south of Tehran). In spite of the fact that the source of information of such Iranian nuclear activities was a disputed one, many scholars and some US nuclear experts strongly believe that "Israel was the real source."<sup>65</sup> That is, with the help of Israeli intelligence when MEK's Alireza Jafarzadeh staged the August 14, 2002 revelation, it added further fuel to tensions between Iran and the US. Analysts view that although the construction of Iran's nuclear facilities as revealed by the NCR did not amount to a violation of the NPT, the key point was that Iran had not formally informed the IAEA of these activities that made them appear suspect. As a result, in clear terms, the revelation of Iranian secret nuclear programme in 2002 quickly propelled its case to the centre stage of world politics with US strong reactions. The US quickly seized the opportunity and used this revelation as 'compelling evidence' of Iran's attempts to develop nuclear capability. Now, the US in association with its ally—Israel, engaged their all efforts to prevent Iran from achieving nuclear capability. However, what has made Iran's nuclear programme a major focus of global politics as well as a key object of contention between Iran and the US since then is whether this programme will ultimately be used for nuclear weapons development.

Although the Tehran government has persistently been claiming that its nuclear programme is 100% peaceful and has been designed solely to meet the country's civilian energy needs and research purposes,<sup>66</sup> and it had no intention for proliferation, but Iran's secrecy regarding the programme aroused suspicion in the US, Israeli, and European minds. They feared that Iran was planning to acquire nuclear weapons, because the same technology use for civilian power generation can produce weapons as well. In this context, when on February 3, 2003, Iran's secret uranium enrichment process was revealed more tension and fear were added to the US and Israel and their European allies. With a policy that Washington will not accept a nuclear-armed Iran,



the US even threatened Iran with military action if needed to dissuade Tehran from its nuclear programme. However, Iran pragmatically sought to use diplomacy as a way to reduce tension over its nuclear programme. Thus a lengthy process of negotiation began since August 2003 between Iran on the one hand and the IAEA and three European countries (Britain, France and Germany—the Troika or commonly known as EU3, plus the European Union’s High Representative for the Common Foreign and Security Policy, Javier Solana) on the other who were less convinced than the US-Israeli allies that Iran was trying to acquire nuclear weapons. Since then Iran-US interaction was essentially in the context of the IAEA and EU3.

President Bush who earlier branded Iran as a member of the “axis of evil” in January 2002, then flatly rejected Iran’s “grand bargain” offer in May 2003, hated to engage with the country over its nuclear programme and favored going straight to the UNSC to take punitive measures against Iran. Thus the US let the EU3 to engage with Iran over Tehran’s nuclear programme. On June 25, 2003, President Bush declared that “we will not tolerate” a nuclear-armed Iran.<sup>67</sup> In this context, the negotiations over Iran’s nuclear programme formally began on August 2003 between Iran and the EU3. Under US pressure, Iran offered full access of its nuclear facilities to the IAEA as a gesture of goodwill.<sup>68</sup> On November 10, 2003, in a 29-page report the IAEA stated: “To date, there is no evidence that the previously undeclared nuclear material and activities ... were related to a nuclear weapons programme.”<sup>69</sup> In reactions, the US Under Secretary of State for Arms Control, John Bolton, dismissed the IAEA’s report on Iran, saying that it was “impossible to believe”. Bolton also argued that the report underscored the US position that Iran was engaged in a “massive and covert” effort to acquire nuclear weapons.<sup>70</sup> This US position clearly shows that it was thinking to extend its Iraq war to Iran to export democracy there.

On November 26, 2003, the IAEA adopted a resolution that condemned Iran’s 18 year cover-up of its nuclear programme, but categorically said there was “no evidence” of Iran’s covert nuclear arms programme. According to an expert the resolution was passed much to the chagrin of the Bush administration, who tried to get Iran brought before the UNSC for violation of the NPT to which it was a signatory<sup>71</sup> so that it could make an excuse to extend the Iraq war to Iran. As the US and Israel adopted a very hard line and threatened military strikes against the nuclear facilities if the diplomatic route failed to halt Iran’s progress towards nuclear weapons, Iran reluctantly agreed to the ‘Additional Protocol’ on December 18, 2003, which gave IAEA inspectors the right to visit any facilities they wanted as short notice. In 2004 the IAEA inspected the new plants in Iran and found no evidence of military related nuclear activity. This encouraged the EU3 negotiators who became more optimistic about the reduction of Iran-US tensions over Iran’s nuclear programme. They made a proposal whereby the Iranians would agree to continued inspection and the Americans would provide spare parts for the Iranian planes as requested by Khatami. The Office of Secretary of State had given a green light and stated that the proposal

was agreeable for the Americans. Oddly enough, neoconservatives in the Bush administration including John Bolton flatly rejected the EU3 proposal. Consequently, there was no deal over Iran's nuclear programme, and there was no break-through in Iran-US relations.

The subsequent joint efforts of Iran and EU3 produced what came to be known as the Brussels Agreement on February 23, 2004. Of the issues agreed upon in Brussels Agreement, Iran accepted to suspend the manufacture of parts and assembly of centrifuges. It was also agreed that the agreement would come into effect following the June 2004 meeting of the IAEA Board of Governors' meeting. The US immediately turned down the agreement.<sup>72</sup> The US rejection of the Brussels Agreement doomed the prospect of Iran-US reconciliation.<sup>73</sup> Why did the US oppose the implementation of the Brussels Agreement that could have resolved Iran's nuclear controversy? Regarding the US objectives, Shireen T. Hunter has observed that at the time, the US was bent on regime change in Iran, including, if need be, by military means. Policymakers in Washington concluded that Iranian nuclear programme was an important element together with Iran's sponsorship of terrorism and its human rights abuses and these altogether would serve as justification for military action against Iran for regime change. Hunter has finally put: "If the Iranian-European agreement became operational, it would have deprived the United States of its main argument for military action, as well as for referring Iran's dossier to the UN Security Council and thus setting the stage for military strike, at least against Iran's nuclear facilities."<sup>74</sup> Under the circumstance, the Khatami administration succeeded in working out another deal with EU3 in the name of the Paris Agreement on November 14, 2004.<sup>75</sup> Under the agreement Iran agreed to suspend fully all of its nuclear enrichment activities while the search for a diplomatic solution continued. However, as any settlement with Iran that preserved its right to carry out the enrichment of uranium in future was unacceptable to US-Israeli allies, the US again made any solution to Iran's nuclear issue quite impossible.<sup>76</sup> Then the US intensified its anti-Iranian lobbying at the IAEA and urged the IAEA board to find Iran in non-compliance with the NPT and to send the matter to the UNSC. At this point, we now turn to the current perspective of Iran's nuclear programme and US hostile attitude towards it.

Yet, the US and Israel remained entirely hostile to Iran's nuclear programme for which Iran-US relations have remained hostile till today. The question to be answered here is that why the US was in the past (that is since 1979) and is currently opposed to Iran's nuclear programme. In fact, the US had encouraged and then supported Iran's nuclear programme all the way from beginning in 1957 to agreeing to provide Iran with material to be fabricated into fuel in 1977. However, as examined before, the US limited its nuclear assistance only when it became doubtful about the unpredictable Shah's intention regarding his nuclear programme in the late 1970s. The 1979 Islamic Revolution brought a sea change in Iran-US relations and as Iran was no longer a US ally after 1979, the US government started opposing Iran's nuclear programme vehemently. After

1979, the US argued that a country with the world's third-largest proven reserves of gas and fifth-largest proven reserves of oil is hardly in need of nuclear power. The standard claim of Washington in this regard is that Iran has no need for nuclear power and so, it must be pursuing a secret weapons programme.<sup>77</sup> In fact, in this regard, the US fear is that the Iranian painful and traumatic "experiences in the 1980s", due largely to the US-Israeli machinations, have decidedly changed Iranians' world view for which Iran's Islamic leadership would definitely seek nuclear weapons. So, the US stands in the way of Iran's decision to advance its nuclear programme.

Additionally, the US government has been considering Iran as the leading state sponsor of terrorism particularly for the 1979-1981 Hostage Crisis and extending Tehran's influence to Lebanon for the early 1980s, backing extremist Islamic, anti-Western groups from Iraq to Lebanon and the Palestinian territories namely, Hizbullah, HAMAS and Palestinian Islamic Jihad since the early 1990s. Policy makers in Washington have generally held that letting Iran to move with nuclear programme would be very dangerous for US and its ally Israel since the transfer of nuclear material to such groups was highly likely who might use it to inflict severe pain upon the "Great Satan" and its allies, including the "Little Satan"—Israel. They have also held the view that a nuclear-armed Iran will have the confidence to spread its political and ideological influences in the Persian Gulf region and in the Middle East without fear of retaliation which the US never desires because of its vital geo-strategic (Israeli security) and economic (oil) interests. The US believes that an Iran even without nuclear weapons has been acting to undo US hegemonic ambition in the region, a nuclear-armed Iran will certainly question the credibility of US military dominance in the region. The US (and its vital ally militant Israel) also fear that with an "Islamic bomb" Iran could force militant Israel to accept territorial compromises with its neighbors, which the Jewish state has been ignoring since its birth in 1948.

Moreover, Washington's another big fear is that a nuclear Iran will upset the balance of power in the region where neither the US nor Israel can imagine with another power outside their sphere of influence.<sup>78</sup> To some, should Iran become a nuclear weapons state in a couple of years it will change the security landscape of the Southwest Asia, Middle East, Central Asia and South Asia.<sup>79</sup> Finally, Washington is fearful that if Iran acquires nuclear capability, it will generate arms race and push Saudi Arabia and Egypt to acquire such weapons and can use them against Israel given the long animosity among these states.<sup>80</sup> Given these calculations, the US has been showing its utmost hostility towards Iran's nuclear programme from the moment Iran restarted its temporarily-halted nuclear programme. Ironically, US policy of halting Iran's nuclear programme through successive rounds of sanctions turned into complete failure in the sense that although US-imposed sanctions to which Noam Chomsky calls "murderous regime"<sup>81</sup> deteriorated Iran's economic conditions, it failed to stop Iran to pursue nuclear programme. This is where the present crisis of Iran-US relations over Iran's nuclear programme lies.

**d. Resumption of Iran's Nuclear Activities and Aggravating Iran-US Tensions**

Focusing on diplomacy, the EU3 was able to keep Iran away from enriching uranium for about two years. However, following the collapse of the Paris Agreement in November 2004, because of US opposition, Iran resumed enrichment of uranium after realizing that the diplomatic efforts to settle the nuclear issue would lead nowhere. Iran's decision to continue its nuclear programme caused growing tensions between Iran and the US and Washington's European allies. Earlier, the US lobbied hard for the IAEA resolution of 26 November 2004 to include a 'trigger clause' that would immediately penalize any breach of the deal by hauling Tehran straight before the UNSC.<sup>82</sup> As Iran moved to enrich uranium, the US pressed hard the IAEA to complain against Iran in the UNSC. However, IAEA Director General Mohammed El-Baradei (1997-2009) made it clear that the Iranian nuclear programme be addressed in the framework of an international issue, not simply an extension of US foreign policy objectives. According to an observer, officially what vexed the US most was El-Baradei's repeated statements that his inspectors had not detected any evidence of an Iranian nuclear weapons programme.<sup>83</sup> While on the plea of making a future war against Iran anti-Iran scholars and policymakers in the US began to put forward their arguments about Iran's clandestine nuclear weapons programme and the devastating future consequences.<sup>84</sup> This was reflected on the remarks of Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice when she hinted in early 2005 that the US might attack Iran if it did not reduce its nuclear programme.<sup>85</sup>

Politically, this overall US position was the final blow to the moderate government of President Khatami in Iran. One of the main issues the conservatives focused in the August 2005 Presidential elections was the Khatami government's concessionary foreign policy which had only helped Western countries, without making any concession to Iran. Their campaign resulted in the victory of hard-line Presidential candidate—Mahmoud Ahmadinejad. Once elected, Ahmadinejad rejected the European offer to halt Iran's nuclear programme and embarked on a nation-wide propaganda campaign to make the nuclear issue a litmus test of Iran's sovereignty and independence. In this way, he turned Iran's nuclear issue into a symbol of Iranian pride and nationalism. Emboldened by the united massive support of the Iranians, Ahmadinejad strongly defended Iran's right to enrich uranium during his first international debut at the annual summit at the UN General Assembly in September 2005.<sup>86</sup> Later on, he pointedly noted that even if sanctions were to be imposed, "the Iranian nation would still have its rights" to seek nuclear technology under the NPT. Against this backdrop on January 3, 2006, Iran's nuclear case was referred to the UNSC by the IAEA Board of Governors. With this new development the Iranian nuclear issue reached a turning point while Iran-US relations entered into another complex phase.

It is important to state that since the referral of Iran's nuclear issue to the UNSC in early January 2006, the primary focus of the US and the UNSC had been on sanctions on Iran and by the end of 2006, the US was able to influence the UNSC to pass two resolutions which led to impose sanctions on Iran.<sup>87</sup> Iranian officials criticized these UNSC Resolutions describing them as the US-instigated resolutions, however, Iran had no alternatives but to resume negotiations under conditions far more harmful to its interests since its nuclear issue would be discussed in the context of P5+1, which was formed with five permanent members of the UNSC plus Germany, instead of EU3. The US decided to take part in talks with Iran as one of the members of the P5+1. The US also said it would consider a previous offer of economic and diplomatic goodies to Iran meaning allowing the Europeans to sell Iran civilian power plants containing US technology and new airliners to replace Iran's decrepit stock, but only if Iran suspended its uranium enrichment programme. This declaration, however, did not change Iran's position. Consequently, the US intensified its anti-Iranian rhetoric and actions and demanded the complete suspension of its enrichment programme.

**e. US Plan for Military Strike against Iran**

Amidst this tensed Iran-US relations, militant Israel successfully convinced the US that Iran was secretly developing nuclear weapons by continuously enriching uranium. Israel also warned that Iran was negotiating with the EU3, IAEA and P5+1 only to buy time and that the countdown to a nuclear Iran had already begun. Some in Israel even claimed that Iran could have the bomb by 2008.<sup>88</sup> This Israeli view was supported by some US think tanks who viewed that Iran might manufacture nuclear weapon not before 2008 and probably not until 2015. Some experts even enticed the US government by observing that in the case of Iran having a nuclear weapon, the US would be left with essentially two choices: live with a nuclear Iran or start another Middle East war. But President Bush made it a priority to shut the development of nuclear power down.<sup>89</sup> As a result, the US demand for the suspension of Iranian nuclear enrichment programme grew stronger, the war-monger President Bush now planned for a military attack on Iran's nuclear facilities. President Bush was convinced by the Pentagon hawks who had suggested that limited military attacks on Iran's nuclear sites might result in the ousting of the Islamic leadership. The US even was toying with the idea of using tactical nuclear bombs against some of Iran's nuclear facilities, which had been built deep underground.<sup>90</sup>

Once the war-mongering Bush administration resolved to move militarily against Iran, US officials in Iraq regularly accused Iran of supplying the weapons that killed their soldiers. While testifying before the Senate Appropriations Committee on March 9, 2006, Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice told senators that the US was facing "no greater challenge from a single country" than from Iran. She also said the Iranian government was "determined ... to develop a nuclear weapon in defiance" of the international community. Finally she called the regime a

“central banker” of terror, saying it plays roles in Iraq, Lebanon and the Palestinian territories. She also criticized its “terrible human rights record.”<sup>91</sup> Fundamentally, these comments were not simply off-the-cuff remarks, but rather reflective of official US policy as set forth to make a *casus belli* for a war against Iran and in this way to convince the international community. Scott Ritter has stated that in this way, clearly the US was casting a larger net on the issue of Iran than simply bringing a nuclear enrichment programme to heel.<sup>92</sup>

As the US threat of a military strike against Iran reached dizzying heights placing the Iran-US relations on a confrontational track, Iran’s Supreme Leader Ali Khamenei stated that “if the US ventured into any aggression on Iran, Iran will retaliate by damaging the US interests worldwide.”<sup>93</sup> He also made it clear that Iran would hit back at the US twice as hard as any attack it suffered. Iran’s Revolutionary Guards were holding regular military maneuvers, test-firing new missiles and weapons and warning that the nation was ready to respond to any attack from the Great Satan. The Deputy Speaker of the Majlis, Mohammad Reza Bahonar, said: “There could be an attack at any moment; we must be prepared.”<sup>94</sup> Thus the whole country and its government were on red alert. Reportedly, as part of a planned US military strike against Iran, a US aircraft and thousands of fresh US troops had been brought into the Persian Gulf and more were on their way while the Pentagon updated planning for military strikes against Iran. It is also reported that a force of B2 bombers, F22 and F117 fighter planes, 400 non-stealth aircraft, and 500 cruise missiles could take out Iran’s top nuclear and conventional military targets in 36 and 48 hours. Also as part of the plan, the US agreed to provide Israel with new longer-range bombers in the summer of 2006 and sent an “amber light” to Israel to continue preparations for air strikes on Iran.<sup>95</sup> Such US-Israeli military preparations clearly demonstrated that a military confrontation between Iran and the US was imminent. However, for several practical reasons<sup>96</sup> the Bush administration abandoned the plan and once again tried sanctions on Iran.

#### **f. Sanctioning Iran: The Bush Administration**

True, at long last, the Bush administration balked at striking Iran militarily and thus a regional conflagration of major proportion was narrowly avoided, however, it engaged in a limited indirect or proxy war with Iran in Lebanon (described previously) to ventilate its anger at Iran. Sadly, after the dismal failure to contain Iran through the proxy war because of Iran-backed Hizbullah’s unexpected strong response, Washington stepped up its hostile actions against Iran while threats of using force continued. As President Bush stated that Iran’s quest for nuclear weapons cast the shadow of a “Nuclear Holocaust” over the Middle East and, if undeterred, could lead to “World War Three” and hence, he insisted that if Iran had a nuclear weapon it would be a dangerous threat to world peace, his government encouraged the UNSC to impose new sanctions on Iran that targeted Iranian arms sales and the influential Revolutionary Guards for Tehran’s continuous efforts to advance nuclear programme. The Bush administration

succeeded in influencing the UNSC to impose tougher sanctions on Iran. Between July and December of 2006, Bush's administration was able to impose two harsher sanctions while the UNSC passed another tougher Resolution 1747 on March 24, 2007. In fact, from that time, the US strategy has become to isolate Iran until its leaders have become tired of sanctions and decided it is not worth pursuing a nuclear programme any longer.

However, defying all odds placed against the country by the US and the UNSC, Ahmadinejad's government continued to advance nuclear programme with Russian assistance. Ahmadinejad used the just-abandoned US military threat to generate Iranian support his government's decision to continue enrichment programme. In a speech at Iran's Natanz nuclear facility in April 2007, Ahmadinejad said that: "The great Iranian nation will not allow some bullying powers to put obstacle in its path of progress. ... We will go on to reach the summits."<sup>97</sup> In response, the Bush administration worked for another tougher resolution (Resolution 1803) which was passed on March 3, 2008, to contain Iran from enriching uranium.<sup>98</sup> Surprisingly, however, Iranian position remained unchanged.

**g. Iran-US Talks in Geneva: The Rise and Fall of Hopes**

As Iran continually defied US and UN harsher sanctions, no progress was made either in reducing tension between Tehran and Washington over Iran's nuclear programme or in improving Iran-US relations when President Bush left office. Given such Bush legacy plus noticing that following the humiliating proxy war in Lebanon both Washington's military option to strike Iran and aggressive policy of regime change lost their former appeal while the CIA, the State Department, and even the US military advocated for engagement with Iran amidst the fear that some of America's most senior military commanders might resign if the White House ordered a military strike against Iran as previously mentioned, President Barack Obama decided to give diplomacy a chance. He emphasized negotiations with Iran to settle the dispute over its nuclear programme although he did not keep the military option off the table. Iran responded with positive gesture. In August 2009, it agreed to the inspection of its heavy water nuclear plant in Arak by the IAEA inspectors. These conciliatory attitudes of both Iran and the US paved the way for talks in Geneva. Representatives of the Islamic Republic of Iran and the P5+1 met on October 1, 2009, in Geneva in Switzerland which demonstrates the willingness of engagements of both Tehran and Washington.

During the Geneva talks Iran agreed on several points regarding its nuclear programme including Iran's permission to allow IAEA inspectors to visit the Fardo facility and its willingness to consider the proposal to send most of its low-enriched uranium to Russia and then to France for further enrichment and transformation into fuel. For its part, the US indicated that the Geneva talks, if implemented, would be a step forward since it sought a more comprehensive solution to

Iran's nuclear programme.<sup>99</sup> Thus hopes rose after the Geneva talks for a possible reconciliation between Iran and the US. Unfortunately, these hopes dashed quickly for a number of reasons. Reportedly, conflicting objectives of two opposing countries emerged once the Geneva talks ended. Iran was interested in broadening the talks to include other issues of concern including regional and global question as well as costly sanctions imposed on it. By stark contrast, the US made it clear that nuclear issue was the main focus of Geneva talks. Given this US position, Iranian domestic politics and intra-regime rivalries prevented the Ahmadinejad government from further advancement of the talks. The political opponents of the Ahmadinejad government and some political rivals including the Speaker of the Majlis and one-time nuclear negotiator Ali Larijani and current Iranian President Hassan Rouhani (2013- ), once Iran's nuclear negotiator under President Khatami, attacked him for trusting the West for an agreement with regard to Iran's nuclear programme. They raised doubts about the wisdom of fuel exchange and suggested that Iran should pay money for the highly enriched uranium for the Tehran reactor and not low enriched uranium.

Ayatullah Ali Khamenei, who had voiced approval of direct talks between Iran and the US, joined those forces who opposed further talks on the ground that fuel exchange was not of Iran's interest. While general Iranians who do not want to 100% dependent on the outside argue that they had to have their own enrichment programme because they could not trust other countries to keep their promises to supply nuclear fuel. The continued deep distrust between Iran and the West, the US in particular, since 1979 resulted in such Iranian position. Although US allies Japan and Turkey expressed their willingness to be the place where the swap of material would take place, Iran did not agree to the offer. Iran insisted that the swap should take place in Iranian territory, not in a foreign soil. Iran also proposed that the swap of low enriched uranium for high enriched one should take place simultaneously and in stages; Iran would deliver low enriched uranium and at the same time would receive high enriched uranium. The US rejected both the ideas as unacceptable. Upon the US rejection of these latest proposals, Ahmadinejad's government declared that it would begin to enrich its own uranium to the level of 20% for the Tehran Research Reactor under IAEA supervision. The US, the European countries, and even Russia reacted negatively to this Iranian decision and interpreted it as a sign of Iran's more sinister designs. The US now found an easy atmosphere to gain support for stringent sanctions on Iran, while conservative politicians and experts in Washington argued that instead of talks the US should encourage regime change in Iran by supporting the opposition.<sup>100</sup>

#### **h. Sanction Again: Obama Tries the Old US Policy**

Immediately after the collapse of the Geneva talks, the Obama administration quickly moved to impose sanctions on Iran. In early January 2010, President Obama warned Iran that Washington was seeking support for new sanctions against Iran at the UNSC in a bid to curb Tehran's nuclear



programme.<sup>101</sup> While the US was preparing for imposing crippling sanctions on Iran and garnering international support for its move, Brazil and Turkey successfully persuaded Iran to agree to a modified version of the October 2009 Geneva proposal. On 17, May 2010, Brazil, Iran and Turkey issued a joint declaration in which Iran agreed to ship 1,200 kilograms of 3.5% enriched uranium to Turkey in return for Tehran Research Reactor fuel from France and Russia. However, the US did not approve the proposal viewing it deeply flawed. Then on June 9, 2010, the UNSC passed Resolution 1929 by a vote of 12 to 2 (Brazil and Turkey voted no) which imposed the strictest sanctions in history on Iran, targeting the Revolutionary Guard, arms sales, and financial transactions. Following this move, the US Congress adopted the Comprehensive Iran Sanctions, Accountability, and Divestment Act; tightening US sanctions against firms investing in Iran's energy sector, extending those sanctions until 2016, and imposing new sanctions on companies that would sell refined petroleum to Iran. As a matter of fact, between June 2010 and June 2012 the UNSC voted three escalating sanctions resolutions calling on Iran to cease its weapons programme and abide by the nuclear Non-proliferation Treaty.<sup>102</sup>

#### **i. US Cyber War against Iran**

In line with imposing crippling sanctions, the Obama administration tried other means too. It was the US cyber attacks on Iranian computers in nuclear facilities aimed at preventing Iran from advancing nuclear programme. On September 16, 2010, the Stuxnet computer virus was first identified by a security expert as a directed attack against an Iranian nuclear-related facility, likely to be the Natanz enrichment plant. Iran accused the US of such cyber attack on its computer in nuclear programme. There was not instant reactions from the US government, however, two year later on June 1, 2012 *The New York Times* reported that President Obama "secretly ordered increasingly sophisticated attacks on the computer systems that run Iran's main nuclear enrichment facilities, significantly expanding America's first sustained use of cyberweapons."<sup>103</sup> The main objective of this cyber attack was to slow Iran's nuclear programme, however, US also targeted Iran's defense department networks. Thus the low-level conflict entered a new phase with the battlefield being cyberspace.<sup>104</sup>

#### **j. Obama's Robust Diplomacy: Iran and the P5+1 Engaged for a Nuclear Deal**

The irony of Iran-US relations around this time was while new US sanctions and cyber war were causing Tehran-Washington relations more hostile, the both hostile parties met and talked time and again over Tehran's nuclear programme. For example, following the talks held from December 6 to 7, 2010, Iran and the P5+1 met in Istanbul on January 21-22, 2011, which ended without conclusive results. On April 14, 2012, Iran and the P5+1 (in which the US is a partner) met again in Istanbul for talks. They ended the talks calling "positive". They met in Baghdad and in Moscow for second and third sets of talks on May 23-24, and on June 18-19 respectively but no concrete results emerged. However, President Obama insisted further talks. Even on October

23, 2012, during a Presidential debate with his Republican challenger Mitt Romney, Obama clearly hinted that the Iranian nuclear crisis could be resolved by bilateral negotiations between Washington and Tehran. Accordingly, following his re-election to the US presidency in early November 2012, Obama pledged to seek to revive the stalled negotiations between Iran and the international negotiators as quickly as possible so that a diplomatic solution to the escalating crisis could be found.<sup>105</sup> It is true that since 2009 the Obama Administration pursued a “dual-track” strategy of pressure and engagement. Despite the Israeli and American hawkish persuasions that negotiations with the Iranian Islamists would produce no good result, President Obama, as part of his “robust diplomacy”, authorized his new Secretary of State John Kerry (February 1, 2013-January 20, 2017) to reach out to the Islamic Republic of Iran on the basis of the argument that, if Iran did not accept US and Western conditions, it would be easier to enlist China’s and Russia’s cooperation in imposing harsher sanctions on Iran. However, Obama’s “robust diplomacy” was producing high hopes for both parties for a nuclear deal.

## **B. The Rouhani Years (2013- ): The New Era of Reconciliation and the Fear of Missing Opportunities**

### **i) Attitudinal Changes of Iran and the US**

In the context of Obama’s robust diplomacy which aimed at inking a nuclear deal with Iran, on June 15, 2013, Hassan Rouhani who “does not share the visceral anti-Americanism of the Iranian revolutionary tradition” was elected President of Iran. A liberal and reformist political figure Rouhani took office on August 3, 2013. Observers also hoped that relationship between Iran and the US would move forward after years of stalemate following Rouhani expressed his desire that he would foster rapprochement with the US. Previously, Rouhani, as a leading Majlis member during Rafsanjani presidency and as a Secretary to the Supreme National Security Council under President Khatami strongly advocated for Iran’s relations with the West, the US in particular. Now with his victory in the Presidential Election, he distanced himself from his hard-line predecessor Mahmoud Ahmadinejad. Perhaps, for that reason, Washington viewed Rouhani’s inauguration positively and as an “opportunity” for Tehran to resolve concerns over its nuclear programme.<sup>106</sup> As President, Rouhani was seen to take an important diplomatic move towards Israel obviously to appease the US. He toned down criticism of Israel and tweeted good wishes Rosh Hashanah, the Jewish New Year<sup>107</sup> that fell on September 5, 2013.

Historically, President Rouhani’s good wishing to the Israelis was the first such Iranian gesture since 1979 and this is where the US took Rouhani’s presidency positively. Although in an interview with American NBC News television on September 19, 2013, Iran’s new President Rouhani reiterated Iran’s earlier position regarding Tehran’s nuclear programme by stating that Iran had never pursued or sought nuclear weapon, or will seek ever, his non-confrontational approach toward Israel made the US more optimistic about the fruitful engagement over Iran’s

nuclear programme under him. The US was also seen to come up with conciliatory mood. On August 19, 2013 admitted that the CIA was behind the coup.<sup>108</sup> With this latest admission, the US accepted the crime it had committed in 1953 which has been one of contributing factors of current hostile relations between Tehran and Washington. Another US positive gesture came when in a September 24, 2013, General Assembly speech, President Obama explicitly stated the United States does not seek to change Iran's regime. Later on, in a surprising move, on September 27, 2013, Obama and Rouhani spoke on the phone (as Rouhani's limousine was driving him to the airport for his flight home), which was the first such conversation since 1979.<sup>109</sup> Earlier, many had expected the possibility of a historic face-to-face meeting between Rouhani and Obama in New York at the UN General Assembly. Although that did not happen, however, Iran's Foreign Minister Mohammad Javad Zarif shook hands with President Obama, a rare scene in the history of Iran-US relations, in the corridors of the UN headquarters in New York.<sup>110</sup>

## **ii) The 2013 Iran-P5+1 Nuclear Interim Deal**

As these new developments in the history of Iran-US relations were occurring, Iran and the US secretly engaged in a series of high-level, face-to-face bilateral talks (apart from their talks within the framework of P5+1) in a high-stakes diplomatic gamble by the Obama administration.<sup>111</sup> The aim of these undisclosed, separate direct talks between Iran and the US was to encourage diplomacy towards a nuclear deal. Eventually the 'clandestine diplomacy' worked and this paved the way for the historic interim deal sealed on November 24, 2013 in Geneva in Switzerland aimed at curbing Tehran's nuclear programme in exchange for some initial sanctions relief.<sup>112</sup> One analyst has pointed out that the four-page joint Plan of Action, a masterpiece of diplomacy has become successful only because of secret Iran-US meetings since March 2013 (in face of vehement opposition from Israel), driven by political will on both sides.<sup>113</sup> Richard Hass, the president of the influential think-tank body Council on Foreign Relations (CFR), is of the opinion that 'the interim accord between Iran and the six world powers is a significant accomplishment'<sup>114</sup> because it satisfied both parties considerably.

Known as the Joint Plan of Action the interim nuclear deal laid out some specific steps for each side in a six-month, first-phase agreement, and the broad framework to guide negotiations for a comprehensive solution. This was seen as the primary stage of improving Iran's relations with the West, the US in particular. Meanwhile, President Rouhani expressed his satisfaction by saying that the "outcome of these negotiations is that the ... world powers have recognized Iran's nuclear rights",<sup>115</sup> while President Obama hailed the deal as "an important first step toward a comprehensive solution" and credited years of patient diplomacy and pressure. He welcomed the deal saying that it would help prevent Iran from building a nuclear weapon and for the first time in nearly a decade the US has halted the progress of the Iranian nuclear program.<sup>116</sup> All parties

pledged to work toward a final long-term duration accord next year that would remove remaining suspicions in the West that Tehran is trying to assemble an atomic weapons arsenal. However, strong opposition to the interim deal came from US Congress and the US sole and vital Middle East ally—Israel. Israel expressed frustration at the conclusion of the deal and termed it as a ‘bad deal’ and ‘historic’ mistake that effectively accepts Iran as a threshold nuclear weapons state.

### iii) A Period before the Final Deal

In face of opposition from Israel and the Congress to the interim deal, in April 2014, the US government refused to issue a visa to Iran’s nomination for UN ambassador named Hamid Aboutalebi, who had served only as a translator to the hostage-takers of the US embassy in 1979. Under intense pressure from the Congress, President Obama did not to allow Aboutalebi to enter the country. This issue leaves no doubt that the 1979-1981 Hostage Crisis has still been haunting Iran-US relations. Earlier on the anniversary of Iran’s Islamic Revolution on February 11, 2014, placards and posters were seen with anti-US slogans like: “Death to America!” Other posters read, “We are ready for the great battle”, “Death to Obama!” and “Death to Kerry!” Iranians on the streets celebrating the anniversary of their revolution were also seen shouting similar slogans (see appendices).<sup>117</sup> However, Rouhani remained hopeful of improving Tehran-Washington relations. At a news conference on September 26, 2014, Iranian President Rouhani called for renewed trust between Iran and the US and said, “It’s not set in stone” that relations between the two countries will always be bad. He also said that the people of Iran did not trust the US because of America’s past policies, but “this trust must be restored” and he stressed: “The people of Iran must learn to trust again, and the interlocutors must earn that trust again.”<sup>118</sup>

Rouhani’s overture was matched by his counterpart President Obama. On November 6, 2014, *The Guardian* reported that in October President Obama sent a secret letter to Iran’s Supreme Leader suggesting that diplomacy between the two adversaries over the nuclear issue might presage a broader rapprochement. Reportedly, the letter referenced a shared interest between Iran in combating Islamic State or IS<sup>119</sup> in Iraq and Syria.<sup>120</sup> On December 29, 2014, President Obama hinted the possibility of reopening of US Embassy in Iran. In this regard, Obama said: “I never say never,” and added that “U.S. ties with Tehran must be restored in steps”.<sup>121</sup> In the same month a former congressman from Kansas by the name of Jim Slattery made a rare visit to Tehran. He was the first US lawmaker invited to Iran since 1979. In Iran, he addressed a conference on extremism and held discussions with Iranian officials, including Foreign Minister Mohammad Javad Zarif and President Rouhani’s chief of staff, Mohammad Nahavandia. Slattery later told that his visit left him guardedly optimistic about the prospects of a nuclear deal with Iran. Back home, on February 9, 2015, in a presentation at the Atlantic Council think-tank Slattery said that Iran’s President Hassan Rouhani and his inner circle were “deeply committed to improving this relationship with the United States”.<sup>122</sup> As many positives signs of Iran-US

relations were becoming clearer, the US did not oppose when in late January 2015, Iran appointed a new envoy, Gholamali Khoshru, as permanent representative to the UN in New York. Around mid-February of 2015, Iran's Supreme Leader Ayatullah Ali Khamenei responded to Obama's October (2014) letter by sending a secret letter to Obama clarifying Iran's position on the ongoing nuclear talks.<sup>123</sup> In a most surprising move, in late February an annual security assessment presented to the US Senate by James Clapper, the director of National Intelligence, excluded Iran and Iran-backed Lebanese Islamist group Hezbollah from its list of terror threats to US interests, despite both being consistently included as threats in previous years. To some, Iran was omitted simply because of Tehran's efforts to combat ISIS which the US itself has been fighting.<sup>124</sup>

#### **iv) The 2015 Nuclear Deal: A Breakthrough in Iran-US Relations**

Meanwhile, the process of implementation of the 2013 interim agreement formally begun on January 20, 2014 in spite of strong opposition from Israel and the Congress. The intensive talks also continued between Iran and the P5+1 over Iran's nuclear programme. In mid-July 2014, Secretary of State Kerry admitted that Iran-US negotiations over Tehran's nuclear programme advanced with tangible progress.<sup>125</sup> Noticing that Tehran had cut uranium stockpile, the Obama administration came up with the idea of releasing frozen Iranian funds, saying Tehran had kept commitments made under an interim deal over its nuclear programme.<sup>126</sup> Despite US positive stance on Iran, under the pressure from Israel, the AIPAC and the neoconservatives on August 29, 2014, the Obama administration had to impose new sanctions on 25 firms and individuals. Iran's President Rouhani reacted angrily and accused the US of imposing 'illegal sanctions' which would harm current negotiations.<sup>127</sup> However, the Israeli-inspired new sanctions did not prevent Iran and the P5+1 from further engagements. They locked into intensive negotiations. Finally, after 18 months of relentless negotiations on March 2, 2015, Iranian and P5+1 negotiators in Switzerland announced 'framework' agreement. According to the agreement, Iran promised to make drastic cuts to its nuclear programme in return for the gradual lifting of sanctions.<sup>128</sup> While Iran's Foreign Minister Javad Zarif thanking all parties concerned in completing the framework agreement said: "We have built mutual mistrust in the past, and I hope that... some of that mistrust could be remedied."<sup>129</sup> Being alarmed at the prospect of a long-term deal, Israeli Prime Minister Netanyahu gave a strong anti-deal speech in the US Congress on March 3, 2015.<sup>130</sup> In response, President Obama said Netanyahu's speech in the US Congress was the distraction to negotiations.

Hopeful of a negotiated settlement for which his government was working incessantly and laboriously, President Obama, on eve of the Iranian New Year celebration in March 2015, released a video greeting to the Iranian people. In his message Obama said: "For decades, our nations have been separated by mistrust and fear. Now it is early spring. We have a chance—a

chance—to make progress that will benefit our countries, and the world, for many years to come.” In the message, Obama also said that if Iran’s leaders make the right choices, “a nuclear deal now can help open the door to a brighter future for you—the Iranian people, who, as heirs to a great civilization, have so much to give to the world.”<sup>131</sup> After this, Tehran clearly realized that Washington was serious about a negotiated deal over its nuclear issue and Washington was not listening to Tel Aviv right now. Therefore, negotiations between Iran and the P5+1 got new momentum. Finally, on July 14, 2015 on the success and ‘tangible progress’ in negotiations between Iran and P5+1, a potentially history-shaping nuclear deal was signed between Iran and the US in Geneva, Switzerland.<sup>132</sup> Officially known as the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (hereinafter JCPOA) once again proved that good-willing of Iran and the US to settle their decades-long dispute over Iran’s nuclear programme worked. Iran’s President Rouhani welcomed the deal as a “golden page” in Iran’s history and said the agreement could be used as a model to resolve other regional issues. While on July 15, 2015, in a press conference, President Obama contended that July 14, 2015 was ‘a historic day’ for accomplishing the comprehensive, long-term deal which represented a powerful display of American leadership and diplomacy and that would prevent Iran from obtaining a nuclear weapon.<sup>133</sup>

The deal capped uranium enrichment at 3.67 percent and limited the stockpile to 300 kg, all for 15 years. Iran would be required to ship spent fuel out of the country forever, as well as allow inspectors from the IAEA certain access in perpetuity. Heightened inspections, including tracking uranium mining and monitoring the production and storage of centrifuges, would last for up to 20 years. The US government has estimated and taken satisfaction that the new measures have taken Iran from being able to assemble its first bomb within 2-3 months, to at least one year from now. Following the agreement, the US endorsed a UNSC resolution (2231, adopted on July 20) recognizing Iran’s right to pursue a peaceful nuclear programme. Iran reaffirmed its commitment against pursuing any nuclear weapon. However, Israel reacted violently and angrily to the 2015 nuclear deal. Israeli Prime Minister said: “From the initial reports we can already conclude that this agreement is a historic mistake for the world ... Far-reaching concessions have been made in all areas that were supposed to prevent Iran from obtaining nuclear weapons capability.”<sup>134</sup> This Israeli position once again shows that how madly Tel Aviv has been trying to keep away Washington from engaging with Iran or negotiating with Iran to resolve their bilateral problems including Iran’s nuclear issue.

#### **v) Iran-US Relations Since the 2015 Nuclear Deal**

There is little doubt that Iran-US relations witnessed a significant spate of improvement following the signing of JCPOA. Many observers are of the view that despite Israeli opposition to the deal, it has made Iran less threatening to US interests in the region. While by concluding the deal Iran has proved that the Islamic Republic is ready to go with the West with diplomatic

means while the West have assured that the US-led western powers are not going to deal Tehran militarily or with non-diplomatic means at least around this time. This was reflected when on the 23 July 2015, Barack Obama announced his intention to restore diplomatic relations between the two nations. Iran's President Rouhani welcomed Obama's gesture.<sup>135</sup> In late October, 2015 the US invited Iran—a key backer of President Bashar al-Assad—to the international talks aimed at resolving the Syrian conflict. This marked a crucial shift after Tehran had been excluded for long time from the talks, mainly because of opposition from the US and its ally Saudi Arabia. Both Iran and the US began to show more positive gestures towards each other in the following months. On January 13, 2016, in an apparent sign of goodwill, Iran released 10 US Navy sailors detained in the Persian Gulf. The detention of the sailors on January 12, 2016, raised high alarm in the US but following informal talks with Iran, especially after Secretary of State John Kerry's telephone call to his Iranian counterpart Javad Zarif, they were released. Although Iran and the US had no diplomatic relations since 1980, yet diplomacy worked rapidly and for that both leaders called the sailors' speedy release as a textbook example of diplomacy.<sup>136</sup> The US later thanked Iran for the swift release of 10 US sailors held for entering its territorial waters.

Iran was also quick to implement the deal's requirements. On December 28, 2015, Iran sent a major shipment of low-enriched uranium materials (8.5 ton) to Russia, a key step in Tehran's implementation of the 2015 deal [since Iran agreed to cut its low-enriched uranium stockpile to less than 300 kilograms (660 pounds)]. The US welcomed the move stating it as a "significant progress".<sup>137</sup> Meanwhile, the IAEA chief Yukiya Amano visited Tehran for talks with senior officials on Iran's continued compliance with the deal. On January 16, 2016, the UN nuclear watchdog IAEA reported to the UNSC that Iran had completed necessary preparatory steps to start the implementation of the JCPOA and fulfilled its obligations to dismantle the bulk of its nuclear programme under this historic July 2015 nuclear deal. Upon this report, on the same day, Secretary of State John Kerry signed off on paperwork granting Iran sanctions relief. In the evening of January 16, 2016, Iran, as a goodwill gesture to the US, released 4 Iranian-American citizens who were in prison in Iran that included Washington post correspondent Jason Rezaian, Marine veteran Amir Hekmati and Saeed Abedini, a Christian pastor from Idaho. Iran did it in a prisoner swap with the US. In exchange, the US granted clemency to 7 Iranians and it withdrew international arrest notices for 14 Iranians. These gestures raised the hopes of Iran-US rapprochement in the near future. Another important moment in history of Iran-US relations came when on January 17, 2016, the UNSC announced that it has removed all restrictions put against Iran since 2006. Simultaneously, the US and the EU also lifted the sanctions that were imposed on Iran over the past decades. Thus the US lifted all its sanctions on Iran after 37 years paving the way for a better relationship between Tehran and Washington. Iran's President Rouhani called this new development a "glorious victory". Iran's Supreme Leader Ayatullah Ali

Khamenei also hailed sanctions lift, however, he warned that Tehran should remain wary of its old enemy—the US.<sup>138</sup> This warning came true when in the wake of the lifting of all sanctions, because of Israeli influence the US has failed to come out of its old practice of imposing sanction on Iran and on January 17, 2016, it imposed fresh sanctions on 11 Iranian companies and individuals for supplying Iran's ballistic missile programme. Yet, the closing days of the Obama administration witnessed a slow improvement of Iran-US relations.

**vi) The Anti-Iran Trump Administration (2017- )**

In the 2016 November US Presidential Election anti-Iran Republican candidate Donald John Trump won and assumed the presidency in January 20, 2017. The new Trump administration (2017- ) from the very beginning took strong anti-Iran stance. During the campaign of the Presidential Election Trump had declared that if elected President, he would jettison the 2015 nuclear deal that was inked between Iran and six world powers including the US commonly known as the P5+1. As a consequence, despite the legacy of the Obama administration's nuclear deal, tensions between Iran and the US continue to mount chiefly because of accelerated anti-Iran policy under the new Trump administration. In this context, on January 29, 2017, when Iran successfully conducted ballistic missile test it only invited US tough response. Although Iran claimed that its missile tests did not violate the 2015 nuclear deal, the US held Iran "accountable" for its recent ballistic-missile launch, threatening an unspecified response to what it called a violation of UN restrictions. President Trump had also accused Iran of "playing with fire". Then on February 1, 2017, his administration had placed Iran "officially on notice" about its provocative behavior specifically over its threatening and "destabilizing activity" in support of Houthi rebels seeking to overthrow a US-backed government in Yemen. Finally, on February 3, 2017, the Trump administration announced sanctions on companies and individuals suspected of involvement in Iran's ballistic missile programme and its support for foreign armed groups.<sup>139</sup> Earlier, as part of his anti-Iran policy, President Donald Trump also signed an Executive Order 13769 on January 27, 2017, that would lower the number of refugees to be admitted into the US in 2017 from seven Muslim countries: Iran, Iraq, Libya, Somalia, Sudan, Syria and Yemen. Following a block by various US courts from January 27, 2017 (until March 16, 2017), the President later signed another Executive Order 13780 on March 6, 2017 banning Muslim immigrants now from six countries: Iran, Libya, Somalia, Sudan, Syria and Yemen. The order became effective since June 26, 2017.

Meanwhile, in his first joint conference with Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu in February 2017, President Trump stated the 2015 nuclear deal as "one of the worst deals I've ever seen is the Iran deal. ... I will do more to prevent Iran from ever developing—I mean ever—a nuclear weapon."<sup>140</sup> Although the Trump administration signaled on May 17, 2017 that it would not, for now, scrap the 2015 nuclear deal between Iran and the P5+1, however, to mollify Israel



and Republican critics of the deal, it imposed modest new sanctions against several Iranian individuals and four organizations, including a China-based network that supplied missile-related items to a key Iranian defense entity.<sup>141</sup> Previously, on March 22, 2017, President Trump sent greetings to the Iranian people for the Persian New Year, or Nowruz. However, in his message he ignored the government in Tehran. This indicates that Washington under the Trump administration is still debating how to deal with a country that President Trump has painted as an implacable foe.<sup>142</sup> It is pertinent to state that although the Obama administration had closely worked with the current Iranian President Hassan Rouhani and succeeded in inking the 2015 landmark nuclear deal, the present Trump administration did not congratulate Rouhani or otherwise respond to his re-election as President in the May 19 vote in Iran. In this context, the Trump administration was seen to hurl its first bomb against Iran when on June 14, 2017, Secretary of State Rex Tillerson told that Washington's policy toward Tehran was based on regime change. Iran's Foreign Minister Mohammad Javad Zarif hit back at Tillerson, calling on Washington's officials to worry about saving their own regime instead of talking about changing the Iranian political system which enjoys a strong backing of the people.<sup>143</sup>

During his visit to Saudi Arabia on May 20-21, 2017, President Donald Trump made a speech blaming Iran for regional instability. In his anti-Iran speech on May 21 President Trump said: "For decades, Iran has fuelled the fires of sectarian conflict and terror. It is a government that speaks openly of mass murder, vowing the destruction of Israel, death to America, and ruin for many leaders and nations in this room."<sup>144</sup> In early July of 2017, the Trump administration has criticized Iran for not complying with the nuclear deal, a deal which President Trump has repeatedly threatened to tear up, despite the fact that the UN Secretary-General Antonio Guterres has praised Iran for its "full and effective" compliance in his third biannual report on the implementation of the 2015 nuclear deal.<sup>145</sup> Although on July 15, 2017, the US for the first time during the Trump administration has certified that Iran has been complying with the 2015 landmark nuclear deal, however, following day it has announced new sanctions against Iran over the country's ballistic missile programme.<sup>146</sup> Washington has also imposed new sanctions on July 28, 2017 targeting Iran's missile programme, one day after Tehran tested a satellite-launched rocket.<sup>147</sup> Iran termed the new US sanctions are a violation of its nuclear deal with world powers. Therefore, evidences are clear that Iran-US enmity continues to go as the new Trump administration is not going to follow the Obama administration's Iran policy. In this context, the US-Israeli allies are closely observing the tension in the Persian Gulf over Qatar. As the crisis over Qatar deepens, on June 25, Iran's President Hassan Rouhani, in a telephone conversation with Qatari Emir Sheikh Tamim bin Hamad Al-Thani said Iranian government and nation would stand by Qatar. While in early July, 2017, its foreign Minister Sheikh Mohammed bin Abdulrahman al-Thani hinted for a strong and constructive relationship with Iran.<sup>148</sup> These

developments are increasing the tension between Iran and Saudi Arabia and it seems that the US-Israeli allies are waiting quietly to swoop on Iran when a hot-war-like situation will prevail between Iran and Saudi Arabia.

In the light of the above discussion, it is not difficult to understand that Iran-US relations have been witnessing a very dangerous trend since 2005. These relations are full of challenges and risks of getting involved in a war. Until now, the overall gestures from the US are clearly indicating that there still remains a thorny path ahead for Iran-US relations which may lead two countries into a military confrontation at any time. US President Donald Trump has repeatedly been threatening to undo the “horrible agreement” by blasting Iran for not “living up to the spirit” of the 2015 nuclear deal while Israel, who would presumably be the most potential loser of the Iran-US rapprochement following the JCPOA or the 2015 nuclear deal, has been relentlessly working with the present Trump administration to undo the deal by creating an adverse situation for which Iran may be conveniently accused and thus to create a *casus belli* to start a war against Iran at an opportune moment. However, it remains to be seen when that moment comes.

### Notes and References of Section III of Chapter 5

1. William O. Beeman, *The “Great Satan” VS. The “Mad Mullahs”*: ..., *op., cit.*, p. 212.
2. Quoted in Sasan Fayazmanesh, *The United States and Iran*: ..., *op., cit.*, p. 167.
3. William O. Beeman, *The “Great Satan” VS. The “Mad Mullahs”*: ..., *op., cit.*, p. 214.
4. *Op., cit.*, p. 212.
5. Shireen T. Hunter, *Iran’s Foreign Policy in the Post-Soviet Era*: ..., *op., cit.*, p. 63.
6. Barbara Slavin, *Bitter Friends, Bosom Enemies*: ..., *op., cit.*, p. 13.
7. *Op., cit.*, p. 46.
8. Address by H.E. Dr. Mahmoud Ahmadinejad President of the Islamic Republic of Iran before the Sixtieth Session of the United Nations General Assembly, New York, 17 September 2005, available at: <http://www.un.org/webcast/ga/60/statements/iran050917eng.pdf>
9. Barbara Slavin, *Bitter Friends, Bosom Enemies*: ..., *op., cit.*, pp. 44, 61, 216; Shireen T. Hunter, *Iran’s Foreign Policy in the Post-Soviet Era*: ..., *op., cit.*, p. 65.
10. Kasra Naji, *Ahmadinejad*: ..., *op., cit.*, pp. 195-198; Shireen T. Hunter, *Iran’s Foreign Policy in the Post-Soviet Era*: ..., *op., cit.*, p. 43; Barbara Slavin, *Bitter Friends, Bosom Enemies*: ..., *op., cit.*, pp. 56-57.
11. Barbara Slavin, *Bitter Friends, Bosom Enemies*: ..., *op., cit.*, p. 59. In fact, Israeli opposition to Iran-US reconciliation manifested since the Iran-Iraq War when it had worked in close association with US and Saudi Arabia to doom both Iran and Iraq. Moreover, Iran’s opposition to Arab-Israeli peace process came only when the US-Israeli allies isolated Iran from regional restructuring after the end of the Cold War and the end of the 1991 Gulf War.
12. Quoted in Sasan Fayazmanesh, *The United States and Iran*: ..., *op., cit.*, p. 174.
13. Barbara Slavin, *Bitter Friends, Bosom Enemies*: ..., *op., cit.*, p. 51. On October 26, 2005, *The New York Times* headlined: “Iran’s President Says Israel Must Be ‘Wiped Off the Map’”. While on October 27, *The Jerusalem Post* wrote: “Iranian president: ‘Wipe Israel off map.’”
14. Shireen T. Hunter, *Iran’s Foreign Policy in the Post-Soviet Era*: ..., *op., cit.*, pp. 63-64; John J. Mearsheimer and Stephen M. Walt, *The Israel Lobby and U.S. Foreign Policy*, *op., cit.*, p. 280; Sasan Fayazmanesh, *The United States and Iran*: ..., *op., cit.*, p. 174.
15. Barbara Slavin, *Bitter Friends, Bosom Enemies*: ..., *op., cit.*, p. 8.
16. For more about the conference see: Kasra Naji, *Ahmadinejad*: ..., *op., cit.*, pp. 139-174.
17. Barbara Slavin, *Bitter Friends, Bosom Enemies*: ..., *op., cit.*, p. 59.

18. Anoush Ehteshami and Mahjoob Zweiri, *Iran and the Rise of its Neoconservatives: ...*, *op. cit.*, pp. 105-109.
19. Barbara Slavin, *Bitter Friends, Bosom Enemies: ...*, *op. cit.*, p.88-93.
20. Trita Parsi, *Treacherous Alliance: ...*, *op. cit.*, pp. 274-275.
21. Anoush Ehteshami and Mahjoob Zweiri, *Iran and the Rise of its Neoconservatives: ...*, *op. cit.*, p. 101.
22. Quoted in Noam Chomsky's *Failed State: ...*, *op. cit.*, p. 146.
23. *Op. cit.*, p. 146.
24. Shireen T. Hunter, *Iran's Foreign Policy in the Post-Soviet Era: ...*, *op. cit.*, p. 68.
25. Kasra Naji, *Ahmadinejad: ...*, *op. cit.*, p. 205.
26. Barbara Slavin, *Bitter Friends, Bosom Enemies: ...*, *op. cit.*, p. 20; Trita Parsi, *Treacherous Alliance: ...*, *op. cit.*, p. 284. Reportedly, some talks did take place on May 28, 2007 in Baghdad between Iranian Ambassador to Iraq Kazemi Qumi and US Ambassador Ryan Crocker (2007-2009).
27. The Iraq Study group was a ten-person bipartisan panel appointed on March 15, 2006, by the US Congress that was charged with assessing the situation in Iraq and the US-led Iraq War and making policy recommendations. The Iraq Study Group released its final report on their Website on December 6, 2006. The report is available at: [www.antiwar.com/ISG.pdf](http://www.antiwar.com/ISG.pdf)
28. For the report, see Iraq Study Group Report p. 50. [www.antiwar.com/ISG.pdf](http://www.antiwar.com/ISG.pdf)
29. Shireen T. Hunter, *Iran's Foreign Policy in the Post-Soviet Era: ...*, *op. cit.*, p. 68. See also: John J. Mearsheimer and Stephen M. Walt, *The Israel Lobby and U.S. Foreign Policy*, *op. cit.*, p. 281.
30. Quoted in William O. Beeman, *The "Great Satan" VS. The "Mad Mullahs": ...*, *op. cit.*, p. 42. For more see: Sasan Fayazmanesh, *The United States and Iran: ...*, *op. cit.*, pp. 185-186.
31. "The President's News Conference", January 26, 2006, *The American Presidency Project*, <http://www.presidency.ucsb.edu/ws/index.php?pid=65146>
32. Scott Ritter, *Target Iran: ...*, *op. cit.*, p. 195.
33. Mohamed A. El-Khaws, 'Iran's Nuclear Controversy: ...', *op. cit.*, pp. 31-32.
34. Sasan Fayazmanesh, *The United States and Iran: ...*, *op. cit.*, p. 186; Steven Kull, *Feeling Betrayed: The Roots of Muslim Anger at America*, Brookings Institution Press, Washington, D.C., 2011, p. 144. In WorldPublicOpinion.org polling (conducted in 2006), 59% Iranian opined that the US was a critical threat to their country.
35. *Europa World Year Book, 2012*, p. 3932; Shireen T. Hunter, *Iran's Foreign Policy in the Post-Soviet Era: ...*, *op. cit.*, p. 12.
36. 'Jimmy Carter calls for US to make friends with Iran after 27 years', *The Independent* (UK), May 26, 2008, <http://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/politics/jimmy-carter-calls-for-us-to-make-friends-with-iran-after-27-years-834302.html>
37. 'Terror Free Tomorrow', available at: <http://www.terrorfreetomorrow.org/template.php?section=PL>
38. For example, in December 2006, the Iraq Study Group recommended that the Bush administration negotiate with Iran rather than confront it. Additionally, the CIA, the State Department, and even the US military which show little enthusiasm for bombing Iran's nuclear facilities sang in the same tune and advocated for engagement with Iran. In late February 2007, *Sunday Times* of London reported that "some of America's most senior military commanders are prepared to resign if the White House orders a military strike against Iran. John J. Mearsheimer and Stephen M. Walt, *The Israel Lobby and U.S. Foreign Policy*, *op. cit.*, p. 285.
39. See: Barbara Slavin, *Bitter Friends, Bosom Enemies: ...*, *op. cit.*, p. 32.
40. Tudor A. Onea, *US Foreign Policy in the post-Cold War Era, Resistant versus Assertiveness from George H. W. Bush to Barack Obama*, Palgrave MacMillan, USA, 2013, p. 150. Jerome Corsi, *Why Israel Can't Wait: The Coming War between Israel and Iran*, Threshold Editions, New York, 2009, p. 19; Hillary Rodham Clinton, *Hard Choices*, *op. cit.*, p. 421.
41. Shireen T. Hunter, *Iran's Foreign Policy in the Post-Soviet Era: ...*, *op. cit.*, p. 71.
42. *Op. cit.*, p. 70.
43. The P5+1 is a group of six world powers which, in 2006, joined together in diplomatic efforts with Iran with regard to its nuclear programme. The term refers to the UNSC's 5 permanent members (the P5); namely China, France, Russia, the United Kingdom, and the United States; plus Germany.
44. Shireen T. Hunter, *Iran's Foreign Policy in the Post-Soviet Era: ...*, *op. cit.*, p. 72.
45. Abbas Milani, 'Ahmadinejad vs. The Ayatollah', *The National Interest*, No. 114, July-August 2011, p. 42; Shireen T. Hunter, *Iran's Foreign Policy in the Post-Soviet Era: ...*, *op. cit.*, p. 72.
46. To some analysts the Green Movement was genuine. For more about the Green Movement see: Hamid Dabashi, *The Green Movement in Iran*, Transaction Publishers, USA, 2011, pp. 9-14, 23-29; Hamid

- Dabashi, *Iran, the Green Movement and the USA: The Fox and the Paradox*, Zed Books, New York, 2010.
47. Hillary Rodham Clinton, *Hard Choices*, *op., cit.*, p. 423.
  48. "Hillary Clinton warns Latin America off close Iran ties", *BBC News*, December 11, 2009, <http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/americas/8409081.stm>
  49. "Obama interview with BBC Persian TV", *BBC News*, September 24, 2010, <http://www.bbc.com/news/world-us-canada-11408615>
  50. *The Europa World Year Book 2013*, Vol. 1, 54th Edition, Routledge, USA, p. 2301.
  51. Frank Gardner, "Why Iran's capture of US drone will shake CIA", *BBC News*, December 8, 2011, <http://www.bbc.com/news/world-us-canada-16095823>
  52. Rick Gladstone, "Iran Complains to Security Council About Spy Drone", *The New York Times*, December 9, 2011, <http://www.nytimes.com/2011/12/10/world/middleeast/iran-complains-to-security-council-about-spy-drone.html>
  53. Mustafa Kibaroglu, 'Iran's Nuclear Ambitions from a Historical Perspective and the Attitude of the West', *Middle Eastern Studies*, Vol. 43, No. 2, March 2007, p. 225; Barbara Slavin, *Bitter Friends, Bosom Enemies: ...*, *op., cit.*, p. 28; Shireen T. Hunter, *Iran's Foreign Policy in the Post-Soviet Era: ...*, *op., cit.*, p. 64.
  54. Saiyid Athar Abbas Rizvi, *Iran: ...*, *op., cit.*, p. 268.
  55. Mohamed A. El-Khaws, 'Iran's Nuclear Controversy: Prospects for a Diplomatic Solution', *Mediterranean Quarterly*, Fall 2005, p. 21.
  56. Mustafa Kibaroglu, 'Good for the Shah, Banned for the Mullahs: The West and Iran's Quest for Nuclear Power', *Middle East Journal*, Vol. 60, No. 2, Spring 2006, p. 214.
  57. Shireen T. Hunter, *Iran's Foreign Policy in the Post-Soviet Era: ...*, *op., cit.*, p. 64.
  58. Firstly, Khomeini considered nuclear weapons as well as chemical and biological weapons as immoral and Islamically prohibited. Secondly, Iran's faltering economy due to the revolutionary turmoil also led Islamic leaders not to continue the nuclear programme. Khomeini viewed that the nuclear programme would waste the money of the already bankrupted Iran. Thirdly, the nuclear programme and other arms purchasing programmes were associated with the ex-Shah and his backer—the US and other foreign powers.
  59. Kenneth M. Pollack, *The Persian Puzzle: ...*, *op., cit.*, p. 181.
  60. Observers are of the view that had Iran possessed nuclear weapons, the US may have thought twice about interjecting its Navy into the Persian Gulf and engaging Iranians militarily. See: Mustafa Kibaroglu, 'Good for the Shah, Banned for the Mullahs: ...', *op., cit.*, p. 216.
  61. Mustafa Kibaroglu, 'Iran's Nuclear Ambitions from a Historical Perspective and the Attitude of the West', *op., cit.*, pp. 233-234..
  62. Shireen T. Hunter, *Iran's Foreign Policy in the Post-Soviet Era: ...*, *op., cit.*, p. 65.
  63. Joseph J. St. Marie and Shahdad Naghshpour, *Revolutionary Iran and the United States: ...*, *op., cit.*, p. 157; Trita Parsi, *Treacherous Alliance: ...*, *op., cit.*, p. 144.
  64. Alireza Zafarzadeh, who has been maintaining close ties with Israel for long time, considers the Islamic regime his "sole enemy". In 2007, he wrote a book entitled *The Iran Threat: President Ahmadinejad and the Coming Nuclear Crisis* highlighting the risk of Iran's nuclear weapons programme and increasing insurgency and chaos in Iraq just because of Iran's role. In the book he focuses on "Iranian regime is the main problem" to influence the US to act against Iran.
  65. Barbara Slavin, *Bitter Friends, Bosom Enemies: ...*, *op., cit.*, p. 25; Sasan Fayazmanesh, *The United States and Iran: ...*, *op., cit.*, pp. 120-121. Trita Parsi, *Treacherous Alliance: ...*, *op., cit.*, p. 245.
  66. For other possible purposes as to why Iran wants to continue its nuclear programme, see: Ehsaneh I. Sadr, 'The Impact of Iran's Nuclearization on Israel', *Middle East Policy*, Nol. XII, No. 2, Summer 2005, p. 60; Dr. Maqsdul Hasan Nuri, 'Nuclear Iran: Regional Implications', *Islamabad Policy Research Institute (IPRI)*, vol. VI, no. 2, 2006, p. 16; Saira Khan, *Iran and Nuclear Weapons: ...*, *op., cit.*, pp. 55, 102; Barbara Slavin, *Bitter Friends, Bosom Enemies: ...*, *op., cit.*, pp. 5, 23, 32-33; Fawaz A. Gerges, *America and Political Islam: ...*, *op., cit.*, p. 138; Chris Quillen, 'Iranian Nuclear Weapons Policy: Past, Present, and Possible Future', *Middle East Review of International Affairs (MERIA)*, Vol. 6, No. 2, June 2002, p. 20; Scott Sagan, Kenneth Waltz and Richard K. Betts, 'A Nuclear Iran: Promoting Stability or Courting Disaster?', *Journal of International Affairs*, Vol. 60, No. 2, Spring-Summer 2007, p. 137; William O. Beeman, *The "Great Satan" VS. The "Mad Mullahs": ...*, *op., cit.*, p. 160; Dingli Shen, 'Iran's Nuclear Ambitions Test China's Wisdom', *The Washington Quarterly*, Vol. 29, No. 2, Spring 2006, pp. 57-58; Jonathan Cook, *Israel and the Clash of Civilizations: ...*, *op., cit.*, p. 39; George Perkovich, 'Dealing with Iran's nuclear challenge', *Carnegie Endowment for*

- International Peace*, April 28, 2003, p. 6; Colin Dueck and Ray Takeyh, 'Iran's Nuclear Challenge', *Political Science Quarterly*, vol. 122, no. 2, 2007, p. 201; Scott MacLeod, Nahid Siamdoust and Andrew Purvis, 'Iran Still Defiant', *Time*, Vol. 164, Issue 23, December 17, 2004, available at: <http://content.time.com/time/magazine/article/0,9171,1009668,00.html>
67. William O. Beeman, *The "Great Satan" VS. The "Mad Mullahs": ...*, *op. cit.*, p. 25.
68. Iran demanded a gesture of goodwill in return. Iran's President Khatami requested civilian airplane parts for the aging US-built fleet which were crashing with alarming frequency. There was no direct response from the US government to Khatami's request but the Office of Secretary of State seemed positive to Iran.
69. IAEA website, IAEA and Iran: Chronology of Key Events, <https://www.iaea.org/sites/default/files/gov2003-75.pdf>, access on February 17, 2016.
70. Scott Ritter, *Target Iran: ...*, *op. cit.*, pp. 100-102.
71. William O. Beeman, *The "Great Satan" VS. The "Mad Mullahs": ...*, *op. cit.*, p. 156.
72. Seyyed Hossein Mousavian, *Iran-Europe Relations: Challenges and Opportunities*, Routledge, London, 2008, p. 167; Shireen T. Hunter, *Iran's Foreign Policy in the Post-Soviet Era: ...*, *op. cit.*, pp. 90-95.
73. Robert J. Einhorn, 'A Transatlantic Strategy on Iran's Nuclear Program', *The Washington Quarterly*, vol. 27, no. 4, Autumn 2004, pp. 28-29; Noam Chomsky, 'Solution in sight', *Khaleejtimes*, June 23, 2006, available at: [http://www.khaleejtimes.com/DisplayArticleNew.asp?xfile=data/opinion/2006/June/opinion\\_June69.xml&section=opinion&col=](http://www.khaleejtimes.com/DisplayArticleNew.asp?xfile=data/opinion/2006/June/opinion_June69.xml&section=opinion&col=)
74. Shireen T. Hunter, *Iran's Foreign Policy in the Post-Soviet Era: ...*, *op. cit.*, p. 93.
75. For Paris Agreement see: Sasan Fayazmanesh, *The United States and Iran: ...*, *op. cit.*, pp. 158-159; Seyyed Hossein Mousavian, *Iran-Europe Relations: ...*, *op. cit.*, pp. 174-179.
76. Shireen T. Hunter, *Iran's Foreign Policy in the Post-Soviet Era: ...*, *op. cit.*, p. 95; Scott Ritter, *Target Iran: ...*, *op. cit.*, p. 134; Roger Howard, *Iran Oil: op. cit.*, pp. 54-56.
77. Ehsaneh I. Sadr, *op. cit.*, p. 60; Noam Chomsky, *Failed States: ...*, *op. cit.*, p. 73.
78. Hamid Dabashi, *Iran, the Green Movement and the USA: The Fox and the Paradox*, Zed Books, New York, 2010, p. 76.
79. Dr. Maqsoodul Hasan Nuri, 'Nuclear Iran: ...', *op. cit.*, p. 16.
80. Both countries fought Israel several wars in 1948, 1967 and 1973, but were defeated ignominiously by Israel. Besides, King Faisal of Saudi Arabia and President Nasser of Egypt were enemies of Israel. Noticing Faisal's anti-Israeli policy, the US plotted for his assassination while to cope with anti-Israeli Nasser, the US employed conspiracy theory and gave Israel the go-ahead to attack Egypt in June 1967 without prior signals. The US-Israeli allies know very well that they will not spare Israel for the crimes it has been committing in Palestine and for their former defeat if they acquire nuclear bombs.
81. Noam Chomsky, *Failed States: ...*, *op. cit.*, p. 56.
82. Roger Howard, *Iran Oil: op. cit.*, p. 56.
83. Scott Ritter, *Target Iran: ...*, *op. cit.*, pp. 66-71, 132. Earlier on March 14, 2003, the IAEA was compelled by the US to withdraw its inspectors from Iraq for US-led invasion of Iraq that started two days later although in a bold presentation El-Baradei refuted point by point every allegation put forward by the US regarding an Iraqi reconstituted nuclear weapons programme before the UNSC.
84. For example, Jerome Corsi, an orthodox supporter of the warmongering Bush administration penned a book entitled *Atomic Iran* (2005) and pen-pictured the cataclysmic scenarios of atomic attacks on the US and its ally Israel from Iranian government. Corsi wrote another provocative book entitled *Why Israel Can't Wait: The Coming War between Israel and Iran* (2009) in which he argued "the time is growing short since Iran will soon be able to develop its first deliverable nuclear weapon." (p. 102). At the same time neoconservatives Daniel Pipes, Patrick Clawson, Barry Rubin, Michael Rubin and others were also fanning the Iran threat and influenced the administration to advance support for the opposition groups to Islamic regime to battle the clerics.
85. William O. Beeman, *The "Great Satan" VS. The "Mad Mullahs": ...*, *op. cit.*, p. 79.
86. Address by H.E. Dr. Mahmood Ahmadinejad President of the Islamic Republic of Iran before the Sixtieth Session of the United Nations General Assembly, New York — 17 September 2005, available at: <http://www.un.org/webcast/ga/60/statements/iran050917eng.pdf>
87. The UNSC on July 31, 2006 adopted Resolution 1696 that allowed Iran two months' deadline to suspend its uranium enrichment and made the IAEA's calls for Iran to suspend enrichment-related and reprocessing activities legally binding or mandatory for the first time. As Iran ignored that resolution, on December 23, 2006, the UNSC issued another resolution (Resolution 1737) and imposed sanctions on Iran.

88. Gawdat Bahgat, *Israel and the Persian Gulf: ... , op., cit.*, p. 57; Barbara Slavin, *Bitter Friends, Bosom Enemies: ... , op., cit.*, p. 24; Dr. Maqsdul Hasan Nuri, 'Nuclear Iran: ... ', *op., cit.*, p. 24.
89. William O. Beeman, *The "Great Satan" VS. the "Mad Mullahs": ... , op., cit.* p. 84.
90. Mohamed A. El-Khaws, 'Iran's Nuclear Controversy: Prospects for a Diplomatic Solution', *Mediterranean Quarterly*, Fall 2005, pp. 31-32; Dr. Maqsdul Hasan Nuri, *op., cit.*, p. 26; Kasra Najj, *Ahmadinejad: ... , op., cit.*, p. 193.
91. 'Rice: U.S. faces 'no greater challenge' than Iran', *CNN Online*, March 10, 2006, <http://edition.cnn.com/2006/POLITICS/03/09/rice.iran/>.
92. Scott Ritter, *Target Iran: ... , op., cit.*, p. 190.
93. Quoted in Dr. Maqsdul Hasan Nuri, *op., cit.*, p. 24; Kasra Najj, *Ahmadinejad: ... , op., cit.*, p. 193.
94. Quoted in Kasra Najj, *Ahmadinejad: ... , op., cit.*, p. 201.
95. Reportedly, since early 2004, the US sent Israel the biggest shipment of advanced jet bombers in its history. The planes, capable of bombing Iran, were equipped with unspecified "special weaponry" and deep-penetration bombs. The US also supplied Israel with 500 bunker-busting smart bombs in 2005 for the same purpose. Sometimes between late 2004 and early 2005 Washington might give the Israelis the go-ahead to attack Iran in similar manner to the world's first preemptive Israeli strike that destroyed Iraq's Osirak nuclear reactor in 1981. Noam Chomsky, *Failed States: ... , op., cit.* p. 74; Mohamed A. El-Khaws, 'Iran's Nuclear Controversy: ... ', *op., cit.*, pp. 21-39.
96. Firstly, the US did not want to discredit the reformists and the pragmatists who favored Iran's better relations with the US by attacking Iran militarily. Secondly, the Bush administration anticipated that a US military strike against Iran might lead Tehran to shut off the flow of oil from the Straits of Hormuz thus might disrupt potential oil supplies to the industrial world in the West (Europe) and in the East (Japan) and thus pushing oil prices even higher and negatively impacting the world economy. Thirdly, the US was afraid that any attack on Iran would increase the possibility of a regional war in case Iran was unable to target the US homeland and this in turn would increase the possibility of Iranian attacks directly or through its proxies in Lebanon and Palestine or through Iraqi Shias against US troops and interests throughout the region in the form of violence tends to elicit violence. Fourthly, since the US lacked human intelligence on the ground to identify all locations of the Iran's nuclear facilities, therefore, it would be difficult to destroy Iran's nuclear sites like the one Israel did in Iraq in 1981. Fifthly, given Iran's vast population and larger size (four times the size of Iraq) with a complex terrain involving some of the most formidable mountains and desert in the world, a war with Iran necessitated hundreds of billions of money and large number of troops at a time when the US occupation of Iraq was proving so costly in terms of money and men. Therefore, the prospect of Iranian military invasion seemed gloomy with no guarantee of any success. Sixthly, the military option was not likely to gain the support of Washington's European allies (for instance, Britain) that showed their opposition to the US-led military campaign against Iraq.
97. Quoted in Patrick M. Cronin (ed.), *Double Trouble: ... , op., cit.*, p. 12.
98. The Resolution 1803 was broad in scope. It required increased efforts on the part of member states to prevent Iran from acquiring sensitive nuclear or missile technology and adds 13 persons and seven entities to the UN blacklist.
99. Shireen T. Hunter, *Iran's Foreign Policy in the Post-Soviet Era: ... , op., cit.*, pp. 73-76.
100. *Op., cit.*, p. 75.
101. Julian Borger, "US wants new UN sanctions against Iran's 'continuing' nuclear ambitions", *The Guardian*, January 3, 2010, <http://www.theguardian.com/world/2010/jan/03/us-intelligence-iran-nuclear-weapons>
102. These UNSC-imposed sanctions are: UNSC Resolution 1929 (passed on June 9, 2010), UNSC Resolution 1984 (passed on June 9, 2011), and UNSC Resolution 2049 (passed on June 7, 2012). See: *Wikipedia the free encyclopedia*, [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Sanctions\\_against\\_Iran](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Sanctions_against_Iran)
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104. Joseph J. St. Marie and Shahdad Naghshpour, *Revolutionary Iran and the United States: ... , op., cit.*, p.180.
105. *The Europa World Year Book 2013*, Vol. 1, *op., cit.*, p. 2300.
106. "White House extends olive branch as Iran president Rouhani inaugurated", *The Guardian*, August 4, 2013, <http://www.theguardian.com/world/2013/aug/04/obama-administration-iran>
107. Hillary Rodham Clinton, *Hard Choices, op., cit.*, p. 444.

108. Malcolm Byrne, "CIA Admits It was behind Iran's Coup: The agency finally owns up to its role in the 1953 operation." *Foreign Policy*, August 19, 2013, <http://foreignpolicy.com/2013/08/19/cia-admits-it-was-behind-irans-coup/>; See also: The National Security Archive, The George Washington University, National Security Archive Electronic Briefing Book No. 435, <http://nsarchive.gwu.edu/NSAEBB/NSAEBB435/>
109. Hillary Rodham Clinton, *Hard Choices, op., cit.*, p. 445.
110. "Iran foreign minister criticized for handshake with 'Great Satan' Obama", *The Guardian*, September 29, 2013, <http://www.theguardian.com/world/2013/sep/29/iran-foreign-minister-obama-handshake>
111. It is worth stating that Iran has joined 19 rounds of negotiations either with US-approved EU3 or P5+1 or even with the US on its nuclear programme over the last ten years or more but no satisfactory result was achieved. This led the Obama administration to conduct secret discussions between Iran and the P5+1 and Iran and the US in particular, over Iran's nuclear programme. The secret talks between Iran and the US took place shortly after Iran and the P5+1 meeting in Almaty, Kazakhstan, on February 26, 2013. The talks were held with only a tight circle of people in the know and even US strong ally Israel remained uninformed. Since March, 2013 William Burns and Jake Sullivan, Vice-President Joe Biden's top foreign policy adviser, have met at least five times with Iranian officials. The discussions which happened through numerous channels including face-to-face talks at undisclosed locations also included exchanges between then US Ambassador to the United Nations Susan Rice, now Obama's National Security Adviser, and Iran's envoy to the UN. The private meetings coincided with a public easing of Iran-US discord at least in terms of rhetorical offenses.
112. Also known as the Geneva plan or the Joint Plan of Action, the deal was signed between Iran and the P5+1 for the duration of the six months which ushered in a new phase in Iran-US Relations because the deal was going to be the first step towards a détente between Iran and the US after 34 years of hostility. For detail about the deal see: The Iran nuclear deal: full text, Published by CNN on November 24, 2013, available at: <http://edition.cnn.com/2013/11/24/world/meast/iran-deal-text/>
113. Amira Howeydy, 'Middle East Politics: End of an era', *The New Age* (BD), December 10, 2013. First published in *Al-Jazeera online*, December 7, 2013.
114. Jim Lobe, 'Iran deal gains traction', *The New Age* (BD), November 27, 2013.
115. Parisa Hafezi and Justyna Pawlak, *op., cit.*
116. Hillary Rodham Clinton, *Hard Choices, op., cit.*, pp. 445-446.
117. *The New York Times*, February 11, 2014, <http://www.nytimes.com/2014/02/12/world/middleeast/anniversary-of-islamic-revolution-in-iran.html>
118. "Iran's Rouhani calls for renewed U.S.-Iranian trust", *USA Today*, September 26, 2014, <http://www.usatoday.com/story/news/world/2014/09/26/iran-rouhani-press-conference-united-nations/16275801/>
119. A Sunni Islamist extremist group (follows Wahhabi doctrine of Sunni Islam) in the Middle East, known in different forms such as IS, ISIS or ISIL. The IS is translation of the acronym in Arabic for the Islamic State, while ISIS is the acronym of the Islamic State of Iraq and al-Sham (Syria) and ISIL is the acronym of the Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant. Growing out of Al-Qaeda in Iraq and thus formed in April 2013, the group has declared a worldwide caliphate in June 2014 and fighting for the goal. As of December 2015, the group has control over vast landlocked territory in Iraq and Syria. There is widely held belief that the ISIS is the creation of the US to serve Washington and Tel Aviv's interests by creating troubles in the region, preventing the emergence of 'an Iran empire' hostile to Israel and making the presence of US forces necessary while US and Israeli arms will find lucrative markets in the region.
120. "Obama pens secret letter to Iran's Ayatollah Khamenei as nuclear deadline looms", *The Guardian*, November 6, 2014, <http://www.theguardian.com/us-news/2014/nov/06/obama-letter-ayatollah-khamenei-iran-nuclear-talks>
121. "Obama won't rule out U.S. embassy in Iran", *PBS (Public Broadcasting Service)*, December 29, 2014, <http://www.pbs.org/newshour/rundown/obama-wont-rule-u-s-embassy-iran/>
122. "Ex-congressman visits Iran and makes urgent call for better ties", *The Guardian*, February 10, 2015, <http://www.theguardian.com/world/2015/feb/10/ex-congressman-visits-iran-and-makes-urgent-call-for-better-ties>
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126. "US freeing Iran funds as Tehran cuts uranium stockpile", *BBC News*, 18 April 2014, <http://www.bbc.com/news/world-middle-east-27076367>
127. "Iran President Rouhani hits out at US sanctions" 30 August 2014, *BBC News*, <http://www.bbc.com/news/world-middle-east-28997452>
128. *The Guardian*, April 3, 2015, <http://www.theguardian.com/world/2015/apr/02/iran-nuclear-deal-negotiators-announce-framework-agreement>
129. *BBC News*, April 2, 2015, <http://www.bbc.com/news/world-middle-east-32168195>
130. For the complete transcript of Netanyahu's address to Congress, see: *The Washington Post*, <https://www.washingtonpost.com/news/post-politics/wp/2015/03/03/full-text-netanyahus-address-to-congress/>
131. Robin Wright, "A New Year in Iran?", *The New Yorker*, March 20, 2015, <http://www.newyorker.com/news/news-desk/a-new-year-in-iran>
132. For detail of the 159-paged 2015 nuclear deal, see: <http://foreignpolicy.com/2015/07/14/read-the-full-text-of-the-iran-nuclear-deal-here/> or <http://www.documentcloud.org/documents/2165388-iran-deal-text.html>
133. "The President's News Conference", July 15, 2015, *The American Presidency Project*, <http://www.presidency.ucsb.edu/ws/index.php?pid=110434>
134. *CNN Online*, July 14, 2015, <http://edition.cnn.com/2015/07/14/politics/iran-nuclear-deal/>
135. [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Iran-United\\_States\\_relations](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Iran-United_States_relations)
136. *The Daily Star* (BD), January 14, 2016.
137. *The Daily Star* (BD), December 30, 2015.
138. *The Daily Star* (BD), January 18, 2016.
139. Kenneth Katzman, "Iran: Politics, Human Rights, and U.S. Policy", June 2, 2017, Congressional Research Service, See: [www.crs.gov](http://www.crs.gov); *The Guardian*, "Trump administration imposes new sanctions on Iran", <https://www.theguardian.com/us-news/2017/feb/03/trump-administration-iran-sanctions>
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141. *The New York Times*, "Iran Nuclear Deal Will Remain for Now, White House Signals", May 17, 2017, <https://www.nytimes.com/2017/05/17/us/politics/trump-iran-nuclear-deal.html>
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143. *Tehran Times*, June 16, 2017, <http://www.tehrantimes.com/news/414311/Zarif-U-S-better-save-own-regime>
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145. *Tehran Times*, July 1, 2017, <http://www.tehrantimes.com/news/414677/Zarif-U-S-denying-what-the-entire-world-says-about-Iran-s-full>
146. *The Daily Star*, (BD), July 19, 2017.
147. *The Daily Star*, (BD), July 30, 2017.
148. *Tehran Times*, July 5, 2017, <http://www.tehrantimes.com/news/414847/Qatari-FM-Doha-needs-a-healthy-constructive-relationship-with>



## **Chapter 6**

### **Iran-US Economic Relations Since 1945**

Economic relations between Iran and the US preceded the establishment of diplomatic and political relations in 1883 or specifically before the WWII. But, Iran-US economic relations did not start substantially after 1883 due to the Anglo-Russian sphere of influence in Iran. The WWII radically changed the mode of Iran-US economic relations along with Iran-US diplomatic and political relations. After the WWII the US found a political ally in Iran while it slowly but steadily moved to break the economic hegemony of the British in Iran. This chapter critically looks at Iran-US economic relations since 1945. To facilitate our discussion, the chapter is divided into following four key headings.

- A. Early Iran-US Economic Ties**
- B. Iran-US Economic Relations: 1945-1953**
- C. Iran-US Economic Relations: 1953-1979**
- D. Iran-US Economic Relations Since 1979**

#### **A. Early Iran-US Economic Ties**

Historically, the formal Iran-US economic relations began with the signing of the Treaty of Friendship and Commerce in 1856. Since then Iran looked optimistically on the prospects of developing economic relations with the US, but the US did not come up with similar response. After the opening of the full diplomatic relations between Iran and the US in 1883, the first US Minister in Iran reported to Washington that Iran was fully prepared to welcome the introduction of US capital to exploit the untapped wealth of “coal, lead, copper, and petroleum” to counterbalance Anglo-Russian domination. The US government, however, maintained its “hands off” policy and remained indifferent to these economic possibilities as well as strengthening of Iran-US economic ties. By 1911, the Iranian government was seen to provide detailed information about trade related information to US clearly helping the US to dominate Iran’s trade and economy over other European countries for years to come.<sup>1</sup> Around this time, Morgan Shuster’s assignment as financial advisor in Iran is widely viewed as the first direct involvement of US in Iran. Morgan Shuster, a Washington, D.C. lawyer and a reputed financial expert, started his work as Treasurer-general since June 13, 1911. But due to Anglo-Russian opposition, the Shuster mission came to an abrupt end in early January, 1912 but it left an indelible positive impression on the Iran-US relations.<sup>2</sup>

Following the WWI, the US economic policy toward Iran witnessed a marked change. The US opposition to the Anglo-Iranian Agreement of 1919 was such an example in this regard. The emergence of US as a world power from its former status of a regional power in the wake of WWI and the rising economic or oil interests of the US in Iran were coincidental events. The fear of oil scarcity was increased by official estimates in Washington following the WWI war. This led the US to look overseas to secure additional oil reserves in case of a future war. At about the same time Iran hoped to reduce Britain's influence in Iran. To that end, it refused to ratify the Anglo-Iranian Agreement of 1919 in 1921 and then encouraged extensive US economic investments in the country for new sources of revenues. Iran then developed contacts with the US and encouraged the country to take an active role in Iran understandably for following reasons: firstly, for maintaining sovereignty over its natural resources, secondly, for breaking the British monopoly over oil production in Iran and thus weakening British influence in the country, thirdly for getting the best possible deal regarding oil concession, fourthly, for having economic aid, and finally for improving Iran-US economic ties.

During this time, many US business communities also felt that US should reach a deal with Iran to break the hegemony of the British in the international oil market and thus eliminate the power of non-American oil companies in Iran.<sup>3</sup> The US Congress appeared supportive to this feeling. Noticing this, the Iranian government granted Standard Oil Company of US a 50-year concession for petroleum in the five provinces of northern Iran. When Britain strongly opposed the action, the US first attempt for gaining oil concessions in Iran had been dashed. In August 1922, another US oil company by the name of Sinclair submitted a proposal for oil exploration in the central and southern parts of Iran. The Iranian Majlis voted for the concession to Sinclair with no objections on June 14, 1923. This authorized the government to offer the northern oil concession to Sinclair Oil, or any US company for a loan of \$10,000,000. These developments angered Great Britain and Russia who finally registered formal objections to Iran. Iran remained adamant. On the day that the Majlis were supposed to ratify the agreement, there was a major fire in the Majlis. This followed the killing of Major Robert Whitney Imbrie, a US diplomat in Tehran on July 18, 1924. Regardless of the cause, the source, or the motives of any agent or conspirator of the above incidents, the ultimate result was the termination of oil negotiations between Iran and US Oil Companies. Iran had to postpone subsequently two concessions and thus the possibility of developing Iran-US economic relations was dashed once again. Michael P. Zirinsky has observed that had either of these concessions come into effect there might have been a more active US involvement in Iran compared to that occurred after WWII.<sup>4</sup>

Previously, Iran approached to the US on November 12, 1921, with a request of a Shuster-like financial advisor, to reorganize Iran's public finances. The US government sent Dr. Arthur

Chester Millspaugh and thus the second US economic mission began in Iran in 1922. During its life between 1922 and 1927, the Millspaugh mission made some important contribution in the reorganization of the administrative section of the Ministry of Finance. He and his group provided an in-service training programme to teach American methods to Iranian officials. Reza Shah was able to institute Iran's first systematic budget since the mission balanced the budget by reorganizing the tax structure and increased the revenues by enforcing the collection of taxes, both current and those in arrears. Finally, it controlled the expenditure to some degree. Consequently, Iran's economic conditions improved significantly.<sup>5</sup> But Reza Shah abruptly terminated the Millspaugh mission in June 1927. Reza Shah's action, however, did not affect much to the overall Iran-US relations as in 1928 he patched up Tehran-Washington relations by signing a bilateral treaty to regulate their growing commercial concerns. Between 1928 and 1939, Iran and the US signed some trade agreements, which increased bilateral trade between the two countries. Iran also continued talks with the US regarding oil concession since mid-1930s. With the onset of the WWII in 1939, the US oil companies lost interest in Iranian oil concession. Reza Shah, however, consistently sought a way out of the Russo-German commercial grip by developing trade link with the US. As a result, the year 1940 witnessed enhanced trade activities between Tehran and Washington. One estimate shows, Iran's trade with the US doubled in 1940. Meanwhile, after the Anglo-Russian invasion of 1941, US trade was sought for the overriding objective of intensifying American involvement. Consequently, the annual volume of Iran-US trade reached in \$15 million,<sup>6</sup> and during the WWII, Iran-US trade expanded considerably. During this time Iran actively sought a trade agreement with the US which was signed on April 8, 1943 and was ratified in May 1944.<sup>7</sup>

**Table 6.1** The following table illustrates the Iran's foreign trade (in million *Rials*) with the US in the 1930s and early 1940s.

Year	Imports	Exports	Total	Percent
1930-31	25	66	91	9
1934-35	66	59	125	11
1937-38	83	55	138	8
1938-39	35	53	88	6.5
1939-40	40	93	133	9.5
1943-44	---	---	273	12.25*

**Source:** George Lenczowski, *Russia and the West in Iran, 1918-1948: ..., op., cit.*, p. 328; Donald N. Wilber, *Iran: ..., op., cit.*, p. 159. \*A.B. Rajput, *Iran To-day*, The Lion Press, Lahore, 1945, p. 92.

During the WWII war Iran also benefited from US economic assistance and US economic mission. On Iran's request the US in 1943 sent Dr. A.C. Millspaugh for the second time who had

previously served in 1922-1927 period.<sup>8</sup> Under Millspaugh American economic experts were appointed in finances, banking, government industry, commerce and emergency wartime controls. In this way, Americans were put in charge of all key economic departments of Iran. The third US economic mission under Millspaugh served until January 1945. Iran also continued its policy of persuading oil companies to involve its oil sector even during the war period. Reportedly, at the Shah's encouragement, some US oil companies including Standard Oil of New Jersey, Sinclair, and Standard-Vacuum came to Iran and sought oil concessions. Having been informed, Royal Dutch-Shell sent two London representatives to Iran in November 1943 to seek the same concession that Standard was after. The Soviet Union lost no time in joining the race. Excluded from the ongoing oil discussion in Iran, the Soviet Union got furious and demanded a concession from Iran by sending its Assistant Commissar for Foreign Affairs, Sergei Ivanovich Kavtaradze to Tehran in September 1944. But the Iranian government with the open encouragement of the British and American governments refused even to discuss oil concessions with the Soviet delegate Kavtaradze. Thus an oil crisis resulted from the competition in Iran over oil represented the earliest origins of the Cold War between the US and the Soviet Union. Apprehending a possible future crisis and in the face of nationalist opposition led by Majlis member Dr. Mohammad Mosaddeq, the Iranian government soon announced on October 16, 1944, that it would not negotiate any concession with foreign powers which invited strong Soviet criticism. The US ambassador in Iran Leland B. Morris stated that the US government recognized the sovereign right of Iran to refuse the granting of oil concessions and did not reproach the Iranian government on that account.<sup>9</sup> This US stance substantially increased American image in the eyes of the Iranians impacting positively on Iran-US relations.

#### **B. Iran-US Economic Relations: 1945-1953**

Following the end of the WWII in 1945, the US political influence in Iran grew rapidly and so did Iran-US political relations. In view of some analysts, this was indeed conducive to the forging of better Iran-US economic relations and for a constructive US involvement in rebuilding Iran's war-torn economy. But US commitment this time remained largely confined to Iran's protection from direct Soviet attack. Therefore, during the 1945-53 period, Iran was not a top priority in US interests compared to those of Greece and Turkey and very little US aid was given to Iran in the 1940s.<sup>10</sup> Given the fact, one of the major components of Iran's policy toward the US in 1945-1953 was Tehran's search for substantial financial aid from the US. On July 3, 1946 the Shah had a meeting with US Ambassador George V. Allen and sought a financial loan from the US to help improve Iran's economy and people's standard of living. On September 9, 1946, the Iranian government formally asked US for a loan of \$50 million to carry out economic

development project. The US government did not see any justification of such huge loan but it extended Iran a loan of \$3.3 million in 1946 which was increased to \$22.5 million in 1947.<sup>11</sup>

**i. Iran 's First Seven-Year Development Plan and US Cold Responses**

After the end of the Iranian Crisis of 1945-1946 in which the US played a major role to safeguard Iran's independence, the Iranian government believed that the US would provide Tehran massive economic and military aid. Washington did not come with such aid because many in the Truman administration suggested that Iran was exaggerating the damage of the war and underestimating government receipts. In this context, with a view to modernizing the country the Iranian government turned to the US and signed a contract with the Morrison-Knudson International Engineering Company of US which was to study Iran's infrastructure and prepare a report pertaining to issues such as agriculture and irrigation methods, industries, and transportation so that Iran could apply for loans from the Export-Import Bank and the World Bank to pursue its economic development projects. As part of this initiative, on October 7, 1948, the Iranian government called in an experienced firm of US consulting engineers named Overseas Consultant Incorporated (hereinafter OCI) which finally produced a five-volume lengthy report.<sup>12</sup>

On the basis of the report prepared by the OCI the Iranian government devised its First Seven-Year Development Plan (1949-1955) in March 1949. The OCI report envisaged expenditures for the development programme up to \$500 million, while according to government estimate and as approved by the Majlis, the plan was to cost \$650 million, an average of \$93 million for each of the seven years. Of this annual sum, Iran could only expect at best about \$40 million from oil royalties (in fact, Iran received only about \$15 million in 1949 and in the following year only \$32 million), while the remainder would be obtained by borrowing at home or abroad.<sup>13</sup> With a desire to involve US capital in Iranian economy and to implement the First Seven-Year Development Plan, the Iranian government also asked US for a loan of \$500 million. The US government only agreed to provide a credit of \$ 25 million while a loan from the World Bank of \$ 250 million was talked of with US initiative.<sup>14</sup> Thus, Iran's high hopes of having US economic aid were shattered.

The insufficient US financial aid hugely angered the Shah who made his first official trip to US on November 16, 1949. His visit to US was widely seen as fund-raising visit since he expected a good amount of aid and of investment of private US capital. In the US, the Shah received a friendly reception and at West Point and Annapolis he was welcomed with twenty-one-gun salutes. But behind the scenes, the Shah's visit did not go well. The Shah met with Secretary of State Dean Acheson and President Truman and tried to convince that Iran's First Seven-Year Development Plan needed US financial support. Oddly, the Shah failed to secure any US aid and

returned home completely empty-handed. He was told that US resources were not unlimited and that Congress would never support large-scale aid to Iran. He was also informed that Iran should depend on its oil revenues and bank loans. It was a time when a battle between Iran and the AIOC was taking a concrete shape and this badly affected Iran's economy and the US government was seen to inaugurate an Agency for International Development (AID) programme for Iran. The US also supported an Iranian application for a \$10 million from the World Bank. However, compared to Iran's request, the US provided very small amount of aid. This convinced many Iranians that the US had deserted them and anti-American sentiment began to develop.<sup>15</sup> Later on, due to the shortage of US fund, the Iranian government had to cut short the First Seven-Year Development Plan and as a result, the US economic development advisers were forced to leave Iran.

Under the circumstance, Iran turned to the Soviet Union and concluded a trade agreement and entered into negotiations with Moscow in early November of 1950. This action was also inducing Washington to increase the volume of aid to Iran. However, Iran's turning to the Soviet Union cooled the Tehran-Washington friendship and this in turn jeopardized Iran's search for economic assistance from the US. Finally, Iran turned to its oil industry for revenues and nationalized it in May 1951 after years of failed negotiations with the AIOC. Iran did it as the last option to boost its economy for the development programme. Scholars are of the opinion that by denying comprehensive financial aid to Iran, US, in fact, indirectly pushed Iran to nationalize its oil industry which resulted in the Anglo-Iranian oil crisis of 1951-1953 which drew the US more deeply into Iranian affairs. During the Anglo-Iranian oil crisis, Prime Minister Mosaddeq visited the US and to convince the Truman administration that a loan was urgently needed for economic development and political stability. Finally Mosaddeq asked for a loan of \$120 million to help keep Iran's economy afloat. Mosaddeq's request for a loan was not granted, however, Truman told Mosaddeq that his request would be taken into consideration. In fact, the Truman administration refused any loan on the grounds that since any US loan to Iran would anger the British, therefore, Iran should settle the oil issue before expecting aid from the US. He finally returned from the US empty-handed. On March 20, 1952, the State Department announced that it could not provide \$120 million financial aid to Iran (as requested by Mosaddeq during his meeting with Truman) on the ground that the Iranian government had the opportunity to get 'adequate' revenues from their oil resources. In this way, the US turned down the badly needed loan despite its implicit promise of consideration.

## **ii. US Point Four Programme in Iran**

Before the oil crisis began in 1951, the US, fearful of negative consequences of Iran's deteriorated economic situation, initiated a programme to aid Iran under the Point Four

programme following a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) signed on October 19, 1950, between Iranian government and the US government. It is important to state that President Truman and his advisers selected Iran as the site for the first project of Point Four programme and thus Iran became the first country to benefit from US aid for its industrial, agricultural, education, health and other welfare projects under Point Four programme. Initially under the programme Iran got \$500,000 for 1950 fiscal year.<sup>16</sup> Up to 1953, US technical aid under the Point Four programme is presented below in a table.

**Table 6.2**

US Technical Aid to Iran under Point Four Programme, 1951-1953 (Millions of Dollars)

Fiscal Year	Aid
1950	.5
1951	1.6
1952	23.4
1953	23.2

**Source:** Barry Rubin, *Paved with Good Intentions: ..., op., cit.*, p. 61; James A. Bill, *The Eagle and the Lion: ..., op., cit.*, p.124; R.W.B., “Dr. Musaddiq and After”, *The World Today*, Vol. 9, No. 10, October, 1953, p. 426.

### iii. Iran-US Trade Relations

During the 1945-1953 period both Iran and the US also developed trade relations although in a limited scale. Back in 1943 two countries concluded a trade agreement to free Iranian trade from the strict government control of Reza Shah’s era. As a result, bilateral trade relations increased satisfactorily. The Iranian rugs had special appeal in the US markets.<sup>17</sup> In the early 1950s Lebanon was the largest purchaser of Iranian rugs followed by the US, Britain, Germany and Italy. A statistics shows that in 1952, the US exported \$33,329,000 in dutiable goods to Iran, and imported \$19,968,000 worth of Iranian goods.<sup>18</sup> The following table indicates Iran’s trade with the US during the period of 1947 and 1952.

**Table 6.3**

Iran-US trade transactions between 1947 and 1952.

Year	Percentage
1947	22.78
1948	25.32
1949	35.43
1950	17.56
1952	15.43

**Source:** Donald N. Wilber, *Iran: Past and Present, op., cit.*, p. 159.

### **C. Iran-US Economic Relations: 1953-1979**

As examined in chapter 2, the US hostility to Iran on oil nationalization became clear and the US backing of the British position produced animosity in Iran towards the US. As a consequence, Mosaddeq justifiably blamed the US for allowing the boycott and extending Iran's economic troubles.<sup>19</sup> When overall Iran-US relations were at low-point, the US with the help of CIA and British intelligence—MI6, brought about a change in Iranian government by deposing nationalist Prime Minister Mosaddeq on August 19, 1953 restored pro-West Shah to power. There is little doubt that politically after the CIA-engineered 1953 coup d'état the Shah allied Iran with the US, while economically he turned his country into a dependent state on the US which in turn resulted in the development of client-patron relations between Iran and the US. Therefore, following the 1953 coup d'état the US was seen to extend its economic assistance to its client state—Iran. For its part, the US government took measures to extend its economic assistance to Iran and thus to develop economic ties between Tehran and Washington. Over the next 26+ years the two countries cemented their economic interactions on all fronts. True, after 1953, one of the Shah's goals was to develop Iran economically at the fastest pace possible. His patron—the US also put pressure on him to initiate economic reforms. Under the circumstance, he embarked upon a social and economic development programme in 1963, which he called the White Revolution. In this, with some exceptions, the Shah got US help and thus cemented Iran-US economic relations. This discussion that follows will look at different aspects of Iran-US economic relations during the period of 1953-1979 under following sub-headings.

#### **i. Initial US Economic Aid to Post-1953 Coup Iran**

Following the 1953 coup d'état, the new pro-Western government of General Fazlullah Zahedi that replaced nationalist government of Mohammad Mosaddeq turned quickly to the US for financial aid to restore Iran's moribund economy (which had gone bankrupt due to long-standing oil crisis of 1951-1953). The US economic aid was readily available. In a letter to the US President Eisenhower on August 26, 1953, Prime Minister Zahedi thanked the US government for previous support and assistance and requested for financial aid. In his letter Zahedi said: "The treasury is empty; foreign exchange resources are exhausted; the national economy is deteriorated. Iran needs immediate financial aid to enable it to emerge from a state of economic and financial chaos."<sup>20</sup> President Eisenhower, who only two months ago had refused a similar urgent request of the recently deposed Prime Minister Mosaddeq, now promptly responded to Zahedi's letter and on September 5, granted an immediate and emergency financial aid of \$45 million for Iran to tide them over pending a settlement of the oil dispute and a resumption of oil revenues. Further assistance was also assured. A year later on March 6, 1954, another \$6 million and on May 10, 1954, \$9 million was made to Iran.<sup>21</sup> Iran was very pleased with the US for the



emergency economic aid, which enabled its economy to function until the oil dispute was settled. What is more, US economic aid to support the Iranian budget averaged about \$5 million a month for the three years following Mosaddeq's fall continued. The tempo of economic bond between Tehran and Washington increased over time. In response to the client's approval of the oil consortium in which the patron had 40% share, on November 2, 1954, the US government provided an aid to Iran totaling \$127 million. On April 25, 1955, the Eisenhower administration announced that it would provide a loan of \$32 million to Iran to help the country's economic reform. Between 1953 and 1961 the US provided Iran roughly with \$611 million in economic assistance (\$345 million was grant, and the rest was loan).<sup>22</sup>

In the meanwhile, when Iran launched its Second Seven-Year Development Plan (1956-1962) which was due to start in the spring of 1956, the US came to support it financially for its proper implementation. American Export-Import or EXIM Bank provided a credit loan of \$53 million to Iran for the purpose of carrying out development projects. While on February 20, 1956, President Eisenhower announced that US government decided to provide \$20 million to Iran to help the country's budgetary problems.<sup>23</sup> The Shah made a state visit to the US from June 30 to July 2, 1958, to seek more financial and military aid from Washington. Following the Shah's visit the Development Loan Fund (hereinafter DLF) authorized \$40 million to Iran to support country's development projects such as the construction of highways and airports under the Second-Seven-Year Development Plan. In 1959, when Iran witnessed high inflation the US came to its rescue. The US offered \$8 million economic aid to cope with the pressing situation. The IMF followed the suit and it offered \$35 million. In 1959, the US also gave \$47.5 million as Development Loan which was repayable in dollars in twelve years at 3.5%, except for portions of the loan which were spent on agricultural machinery, silos and textile equipment. In May of the year the International Bank also made a loan for road construction costs of \$79 million. This was repayable in seventeen years with interest at 6%. The inflow of US financial aid continued at the rate of \$45 million a year for the next three years since 1957 and by 1961, Iran became one of the largest non-NATO recipients of US economic aid. As the Iranian economy had failed to make substantial progress, the level of US economic aid increased in 1961 when Iran received \$107.2 million (\$35 million in grants and \$72.2 million in loan) to mitigate its domestic economic problems. Estimate differed, however, during the decade 1953-1963, the US gave Iran between \$1 billion to \$1.2 billion in aid.<sup>24</sup>

However, a change in old patter of US economic and financial aid to Iran was seen during the Kennedy administration. President Kennedy ordered to set up an Iran Task Force to examine political developments in Iran and produce special reports which would determine the level of US financial and military aid provided to Iran. The Kennedy administration saw reform,

especially land reform as a *sine qua non* for Iran's economic development. Therefore, Washington put pressure on the Shah for more democracy and reforms in Iran. The US government officially demanded the implementation of reforms and made the future flow of economic and military aid conditional on the start of reforms. Under Washington's pressure, in 1961, the Shah appointed Dr. Ali Amini, a US protégé, as Prime Minister. The Kennedy administration agreed to give a loan of \$35 million to Iran's Plan Organization.<sup>25</sup> During the period of Ali Amini's term in office of the Prime Minister from 1961 to 1962 the US government had provided \$67.3 million financial aid consisting of grants and loans as well as an additional \$20 million for a development project.<sup>26</sup> Washington kept insisting on social and economic reforms including land reforms, anti-corruption drive, and the institution of taxation in Iran. Washington's such pressure for reforms later led the Shah to initiate a modernizing programme in early 1963 that became known as the "White Revolution". Many termed these reforms as nothing other than dictates of the Kennedy administration, while Abbas Milani is of the opinion that the reforms combined some of the Shah's own long-planned ideas with those recommended by the US at that time.<sup>27</sup>

#### **ii. The Oil Issue and Iran-US Economic Relations**

Iran's oil played a significant part in the development of Iran-US economic relations during the 1953-1979 period. The US played the key role in the reactivation of Iranian oil industry in 1954 which boosted Iran's stagnant economy and created a bonanza for US oil companies. Because in the post-coup Iran five US oil companies namely Standard Oil of California, Standard Oil of New Jersey, Gulf Oil Corporation, Texas Oil Company and Socony-Mobil held major share (40%) of the profit of the international oil consortium.<sup>28</sup> With this, the US economic involvement in Iranian oil industry and steady growth of Iran-US economic relations became a fact and thus the US economic and commercial interests had begun to be entrenched in the country. In this way, for the first time in the history of modern Iran, US interests became heavily involved in Iranian oil after the 1953 coup d'état. These developments qualified Iran to become the thirteenth country in the world since the WWII to conclude a Treaty of Amity and Economic Relations and Consular Rights with the US on August 15, 1955.<sup>29</sup> During the 1953-1979 period, the several US oil companies had full access to Iranian oilfields and they made the maximum profits from Iranian petroleum sector. The Shah clearly understood the US dependence and interests in Iranian oil. The possession of huge petroleum resources enabled him and his country to maintain leverage over the US and to elicit both private and public support in the US for his regime and his political and economic policies and decisions.

As the Iran-US economic relations were gaining firm basis, the Shah encouraged private business ventures by major US financiers, industrialists, and contractors to invest in Iran's oil. In the mid-

1960s, NIOC signed further joint venture agreements with several US companies including Shell Oil, Tidewater, Skelly, Sunray DX, Kerr-McGee, Cities Service, Atlantic-Richfield, Superior Oil, Phillips Petroleum, Murphy Oil, and Union Oil. Such agreements were highly advantageous to both Iran and the US. Under an agreement reached in July 1973 with US Ashland Oil Company, Iran got an equal share with the company in the production, refining and marketing of fuel, and Iran supplied the company with 100,000 to 200,000 barrels of oil a day. However, a new understanding of Iran-US economic relations began to forge over Iran's oil since the 1973 Arab oil embargo. From Washington's perspective, the reliability of the Iranian oil supply was an even more critical consideration since Iran had not participated in the 1973 oil embargo. As Iran provided the US and its allies (including Israel) oil during the critical six-month-period of oil embargo from October 1973 to March 1974 by not joining the Arab oil embargo, the importance of Tehran-Washington economic ties increased considerably. In fact, after the Iranian gesture of 1973, policymakers in Washington viewed Iran as an alternative and reliable oil supplier to the West even if the Arab state should attempt another oil embargo like 1973. This does not demonstrate that Iran-US oil relations were going well.

The US suspended its economic grant aid to Iran by 1967. In the absence of US such economic aid, the Shah turned his attention to oil and decided to increase oil price. At the outset, Shah's decision to increase oil price was seen with less concern in Washington.<sup>30</sup> But later developments slowly but surely put Iran-US economic relations at odds. In February 1971, the Shah successfully led the OPEC countries to increase the price of oil. As a result, Iran's oil revenues nearly doubled in the space of a year from \$885 million in 1971 to \$1.6 billion in 1972.<sup>31</sup> Later on, in 1973 the Shah took full control of Iran's oil and nationalized oil industry for meeting the growing expenditure of the country's development projects under the Third Seven Year Development Plan (1962-1968), the Fourth Seven Year Development Plan (1968-1973), and the Fifth Seven Year Development Plan (1973-1978). As the Shah started his ambitious economic development projects including the industrialization of his country, and modernization of army, he needed money to finance his modernization programme. Hence, he increased oil price and influenced the OPEC members to follow his lead. The US government viewed Shah's move very critically.

Although Shah's oil policy strained Iran-US relations a lot and which ultimately cost his throne in 1979 as examined in chapter 3, but initially to counter the Shah's move both the US government and US business community developed a growing interest in commercial transactions with Iran. As a result, the arms purchases by Iran and the economic drain on the West, in particular, the US seemed a fine way to recycle petrodollars. Although some of US press and even some government officials severely criticized the Shah's oil price-rise policy,<sup>32</sup> major

US business interests became more closely tied to and even dependent on the Shah's regime than ever. These key sectors of US business were armaments, oil and banking sectors. However, Iran-US oil relations remained interdependent: Shah needed oil money for his development projects and arms purchase, while the US needed Iran's oil. It is estimated that in the mid-1970s about 15% of total US oil imports came from Iran. As time progressed, Washington took critical approach to Iran and this approach became evident since 1976 when US moved to build a close relationship with Saudi Arabia for oil by reducing Washington's dependence on Tehran.

### iii. The New Phase of Iran-US Economic Relations

A major change in Iran-US economic and financial relations took place in 1966. In the context of the Vietnam War which was draining US economy, Washington resolved that Iran's oil revenues were sufficient enough to afford the country's development plans and other necessary projects and the kind of financial aid it had been providing to Iran was now not necessary. Washington also viewed that Iran was economically secured and was able to buy some of its military requirements by its oil revenues. In this background, on November 30, 1967, the Agency for International Development (AID) closed its doors in Tehran and with it the US government finally terminated its economic assistance to Iran after a long period of financial support on the ground that Iran was no longer a "less developed country."<sup>33</sup> Below is a table that demonstrates US economic aid to Iran from 1953 to 1966.

**Table 6.4**

US Economic Assistance to Iran: 1953-1966 (*millions of dollars*)

Year	Amount
1953-1957	36.8
1958	51.9
1959	46.9
1960	38.2
1961	107.2
1962	67.3
1963	43.9
1964	25.9
1965	45.4
1966	21.2

**Source:** John D. Stempel, *Inside the Iranian Revolution, op., cit.*, p. 65.

**iv. US Assistance to the Development of Iran's Agriculture and Industries**

As the Iran-US economic relations got a sound basis from 1953, the US participation in Iran's economic progress including the agriculture sector and establishing Iranian industries became more visible. In the case of peasant farming, Iran ardently felt that its traditional system of farming was not modern. Therefore, following big American-style animal farms Iranian government began introducing those in Iran with the hope that this would modernize Iran's agriculture and profit the Iranians like the Americans. Persuaded by US businessmen the Iranian government became also convinced in the 1970s that instead of relying on the nomads' sheep for much of Iran's meat the government should underwrite the creation of large meat, poultry, and dairy farms, with expensive imported equipment, cattle and feed from outside, in particular from the US.<sup>34</sup> US public and private investment in the field of Iranian agricultural sector is also of immense importance. A US investor named George Wilson from California, in cooperation with Iranian investors had 250,000 acres farm in Khuzestan. By 1973, six Iranian private firms in collaboration with US capitalist interests were set up to introduce the Californian-type agricultural projects.<sup>35</sup>

The US also helped develop indigenous industries in Iran. By the end of 1958 a project was embarked upon by a US firm to develop the production and refining of sugar in Khuzestan which was to cost \$23 million.<sup>36</sup> Another US firm by the name of B. F. Goodrich established a rubber company as a joint venture with Iranian capital in 1959. Pharmaceuticals was one of the rapidly advancing industries in Iran where many US firms along with German, French, Italian, Swiss and British established local plants to produce its pharmaceutical products under license. By 1966, US firm named General Rubber and Tyre Company, had built a plant in Tehran. Although Iran's steel smelting plant started with Russian assistance in 1965, a large aluminum plant near Arak in 1972 with Pakistan and the Reynolds Corporation of US as partners. Since late 1960s several US industries flooded into Iran, and leading US military firms began vying for lucrative contracts while a good number of petro-chemical plants were set up in Iran by Tehran-Washington joint ventures. Reportedly, 14 US firms were engaged in mining, equipment sales, and mineral exploration in Iran. One of the most significant US companies involved in Iran was the Anaconda Mining Company, which had a major project near Kerman. The Anaconda signed a 15-year agreement with Iranian government with the aim of providing technical assistance in the development of a copper smelter and refinery.<sup>37</sup>

**v. US Technical Aid to Iran**

With the restoration of the Shah in August 1953, the Point Four programme became a central part of US presence in Iran. The programme brought huge number of US technical advisers to Iran. In early 1952, there were 62 American technicians and administrative personnel were working in

Iran. By 1960, around 900 economic and technical experts or direct employees were at work in Iran. Since mid-1950s, the Point Four programme financed the production of over a hundred technical assistance films for teaching first principles in such fields as agriculture and public health. These all had tremendous long-term popular impact, especially in the villages. The Shah has claimed in his book that the Point Four programme undoubtedly won the affection of the common people of Iran, for most of the projects in Iran directly benefitted them.<sup>38</sup> For example, aided by US health programmes in urban and rural areas in Iran included creating a network of health care centres, setting up programmes to bring qualified Iranians to the US to train as doctors and public health care officials. Alongside these programmes, large-scale irrigation schemes, increasing farm mechanization, better transport and communications, and more efficient government agencies, industrial development were also supported by US technical aid. The US also encouraged providing greater authority to local government, including village councils, and established programmes to provide aid directly to these municipal administrations for construction projects and agricultural loans. Finally, the US established apprenticeship programmes for every occupation from blacksmiths and carpenters to automobile and locomotive repairmen, to plumbers and foundry works. This showed that Iran had extended dealings with US aid authorities to improve Iran's overall economy. In this way, Iran under the Shah transformed from a largely farm-based economy to a modern society by way of major changes in the traditional socio-economic order.<sup>39</sup> Below is a table of US technical aid to Iran.

**Table 6.5 US Technical Aid to Iran, 1954-1956 (Millions of Dollars)**

Fiscal Year	Aid
1954	84.8
1955	75.5
1956	73.0

**Source:** James A. Bill, *The Eagle and the Lion: The Tragedy of American-Iranian Relations*, Yale University Press, London, 1988, p. 124.

#### vi. US Aid Missions and Organizations in Iran

Another area of economic interaction between Tehran and Washington was the US foreign-aid missions and organizations working in Iran. Numerous US private and public economic aid missions worked in Iran during the 1953-1979 period. Privately sponsored projects included expanded activities of the Near East Foundation, the Ford Foundation (also known as Harvard University advisory group<sup>40</sup> attached to the Plan Organization), the American Friends of the Middle East, the Iran Foundation, the Lafayette College consortium etc. The Ford Foundation or

the Harvard Advisory Group, under the directorship of Edward S. Mason of Harvard University, advised and cooperated with Iran's Economic Bureau in the Plan Organization. Financed by a four-year Ford Foundation grant, the Harvard Advisory Group worked on the Plan Organization's Third Seven-Year Plan (1962-1967) alongside other American advisory groups, such as the Governmental Affairs Institute, Inc., George Fry Associates and Point Four. Apart from these, an important US organization that helped Iran's socio-economic development was the Co-operative for American Relief Everywhere (CARE) which started its mission following a severe earthquake in the Kermanshah area in late 1957. The Shah himself was thankful to CARE and to him the most novel part of CARE's work was its self-help programme, i.e., the community development efforts.<sup>41</sup>

**vii. US Investment in Iran: A New Horizon in Iran-US Economic Relations**

One of the most important areas of the development of Iran-US economic relations was the US investment in Iran. The post-1953 Iran provided the politico-economic and psychological contexts favourable to a new bout of US capital investment in Iran. In 1957 a high-official team of the US government visited Iran. The team later announced that the political situation of the country was perfectly stable. After this announcement Iran was able to attract foreign investors, mostly American to invest their capital or provide loans in Iran. US investors received added encouragement when in 1957 Tehran signed an agreement with Washington, guaranteeing private US capital investments in Iran. After this the US investors showed remarkable eagerness to invest in Iran's expanding economy. According to Hossein Bashiriye, US investment in the 1962-1967 period amounted to 54% of all foreign investment in Iran that was equivalent to \$230 million.<sup>42</sup> Thus clearly shows that the US government invested its huge amount of capital in Iran in an effort to create more industrial bases there including energy, steel, petrochemicals, machine tools, and rubber, as well as production for consumer demand at home in the areas of clothing, canned foods, beverages, radio, televisions, telephone, and motor cars. Alongside the government efforts, private investors and entrepreneurs were also seen to invest capitals in Iran. Thus a new horizon in the field of Iran-US economic relations opened with huge US investment in Iran.

In 1971, the Shahpur Petro-Chemical Complex was inaugurated. This was the largest petro-chemical company outside the developed world which represented a major US investment in Iran. US multi-national giants such Dow Chemical, Deere & Co. (farm machinery), and the Bank of America were also involved as investors in Iran. Between January 1973 and September 1974, US companies signed contracts and joint ventures with Iran that totaled \$11.9 billion. The US companies that profited from Iran-US close bilateral political and economic relations during this period included mainly defense contractors (for example, Bell Helicopter International, Grumman Aerospace, Lockheed, McDonnell Douglas etc.), Electronic (including General

Electric, General Motors, FMC, General Tire etc.), and telecommunications (such as International Telephone and Telegraph etc.). Allied Chemical, another giant US corporation had half interest with Iran's government in a \$155 million petrochemical plant which produced sulphur, phosphates, ammonia and other chemicals. In total 29 US telecommunications and electronics firms and 31 engineering, architectural and planning organizations were involved in Iranian market.

Since 1957 Iran was flooded with US Banks and Companies and with it US investment in Iran grew rapidly. It was during this time US and other Western banking circles not only showed growing interests in Iranian business, but also entered the Iranian financial market in ever increasing numbers. In March 1958, American reputed Lazard Brothers and the Chase Manhattan Bank entered into an agreement with Iranian partners for the foundation of a Development Bank which was created in October by the name of Industrial and Mining Development Bank of Iran (IMDBI). In fact, scores of US banks became heavily involved in Iran. Several US banks received and helped invest huge amounts of Iranian money. In both cases, the Iranian government money and funds were sent abroad by the Shah, the royal family, other rich Iranians, as well as the Pahlavi Foundation,<sup>43</sup> which was an effective charitable front for many profitable royal investments. US banks also owned percentages of Iranian banks and held shares in Iranian business. Five other American banks were associated with joint banking ventures in Iran in the early 1970s. At the same time, many US banks made loans to the Iranian government. By 1975, it stood \$1.2 billion with over 200 firms being represented in Iran while by late 1978-179, this reached \$2.2 billion. The American investments in Iran totaled more than \$682 million in 1978, which showed the pinnacle of US economic involvement in that country.<sup>44</sup>

Alongside the US banks and industries, numerous influential Americans who had been formerly stationed in Iran as military advisers, diplomatic officers, intelligence leaders, and industrial contractors later were in charge of consulting firms, research institutes and business organizations, all plugged directly into Iran and contributed Iranian economy immensely. Tehran also became the centre of a Middle Eastern gold rush as arms dealers, contractors, and representatives from virtually all US manufacturers of military-related material descended on the city on droves. The stories of the business deals of billion dollars mostly with US contractors and the frequent visits of US investors and manufacturers were common in the 1970s. A survey conducted by US Embassy in Tehran in 1969 showed that some 100 US business firms had sent about 740 heads of families to Iran to work for them in the expanding Iranian market, and many more were expected to arrive in Iran during the early 1970s. The survey also revealed that some 30 firms, excluding oil companies, made sizable capital investment in Iran. Total US private direct investment was estimated in 1969 at \$300 million. Iran further encouraged private US



investment after the adoption of the Fourth Seven Year Development Plan in 1968, which required some \$11 billion investment. By 1975 US private investment in Iran reached \$1 billion.<sup>45</sup>

#### **viii. Trade and Commercial Interactions**

The spectacular growth of Iran-US economic relations also took place in the field of bilateral trade and commerce during the 1953-1979 period. It may be recalled that Iran and the US had concluded a trade agreement in 1943. In 1960, a new mutual agreement was signed to assist Iran with its economic stabilization programmes which in effect increased the Iranian tariff on US products and hence increased the badly needed revenues for Iran. Of the four types of Iran's trade relations<sup>46</sup> with foreign countries, the US enjoyed the "most favoured nations" along with Pakistan and Turkey.<sup>47</sup> In the meantime, numerous trade contacts were made with the US. Consequently, a significant amount of two-way trade (export and import) and commerce between Tehran and Washington developed. A statistics reveals that in 1963, Iran's imports from the US amounted to \$103.7 million and its exports to the US reached \$40.4 million. Of the exporting products to the US, Iran's oil topped. Since Iran's textile industry was the second largest and oldest industry in Iran after the oil industry, Iran exported large quantities of cotton and other textiles annually to US and other European nations like Great Britain. Other products Iran exported to US included wheat, fresh and dried fruits, carpets, cotton and hide, as well as some finished goods like soap, detergent components, hosiery and various types of vegetable oil. Iran also exported to US a variety of fruits including apples, peaches, apricots, grapes, cherries, plums, pears, pomegranates, oranges, grapefruit, tangerines, lemons, limes, dates, olives, and a variety of delectable melons, nuts, fish (caviar).<sup>48</sup>

US exports to Iran rose 7 percent in 1967, from \$230.4 million in 1966 to \$246.1 million. By 1968 for the fourth consecutive year total Iran's imports reached \$1,126 million. Between 1953 and 1979, Iran was the major importer of US goods (25% of all Iran's imports were made in the US) in the Middle East.<sup>49</sup> Due to close Iran-US relations the US got a big market in Iran for its military weaponry and other luxury products perfumes, ladies' hand-bags, motor cars etc. American high technology, grain, butter and agricultural equipment and consumer goods also had large sales in Iran during these years. The Iranian market was also a bonanza for the US arms, electronic and telecommunication industries and the competition for contacts was sordid, involving bribery, huge commissions, and payoffs of all kinds.<sup>50</sup> In this context, a high-powered US business delegation was sent to Iran in May 1970 to explore more areas of investment and to cement Tehran-Washington bilateral trade relations. As a result, trade and commerce accelerated between Tehran and Washington while the US exports to Iran recorded a remarkable increase, from \$155 million in 1971 to roughly \$500 million in 1972. It reached to \$558.4 million in the

following year. Thus the US for the first time in a decade, surpassed West Germany as Iran's largest supplier providing over one-fifth of its total imports.<sup>51</sup> For overall economic activities between the two countries, a trade development centre was established in Tehran in 1973. Iran also developed a merchant marine by establishing modern shipping lines there in the Persian Gulf—one of the main thoroughfares of world trade and commerce—and Iran allowed a number of US leading shipping lines in the Persian Gulf including American Export Lines, American President Lines, and United States Line. In a communiqué on November 2, 1973, Iran and the US agreed to establish a joint economic commission to accelerate further commercial relations of all kinds between the two countries.

On March 4, 1975, Tehran and Washington signed a bilateral trade agreement which in actuality marked a watershed in Iran-US economic relations. The agreement committed Iran to purchasing \$15 billion in goods from the US over a five-year period. This was to be distributed as \$5 billion in normal trade that would rise 20% each year; \$5 billion in armaments and related services and \$7 billion on developmental projects that would include such items as the supply and construction in Iran of eight nuclear power plants, water desalting installations, etc. The 1975 economic agreement was generally viewed as an extremely significant for both nations. In particular, it was a potential economic bonanza for the US, while at the same time Iran became a member of the club of industrial nation because of its strong ties with US through this agreement. It was at that time Iran made efforts to invest in two major US corporations: Boeing and Pan American Airlines and saved them from financial embarrassment.<sup>52</sup> Hossein Fardoust has noted that according to the US Secretary of Treasury, in 1977, Iran's purchases from the US exceeded \$40 billion.<sup>53</sup> While Dilip Hiro has pointed out that the trade between Iran and the US during 1976-1980 was expected to rise to \$40 billion, with US exports at \$24 billion, and Iranian non-oil exports at \$2 billion and oil shipments at \$14 billion.<sup>54</sup> Reportedly, by 1977-1978 Iranian exports other than oil rose to about \$668 million and included industrial products, textiles, knitwear, clothes, metal goods, chemicals, pharmaceuticals, soaps, detergents, shoes, skins, and leather. Carpets formed 28% of foreign exchange earnings and the principal buyers were the US, the Soviet Union, West Germany, Italy and Kuwait. Document records that in 1975, the US was Iran's first trading partner with nearly 20% share in Iran's non-military imports. By 1977 the US had slipped into third place with 15% of the share while West Germany and Japan placed first and second respectively. By that time, in fact, Iran's rival Saudi Arabia had emerged as US most important trading partner in the region.<sup>55</sup> This also demonstrates the US policy of distancing the Shah.

#### **D. Iran-US Economic Relations Since 1979**

Like political relations, there was clear change in Iran-US economic relations since the 1979 Islamic Revolution. Whereas there were unrestricted economic relations between Tehran and Washington before the Islamic Revolution, Iran-US economic relations reduced to negation following the revolution. Yet, whatever Iran-US economic relationship remained in an extremely limited fashion after 1979, it phased out in the 1990s and since the beginning of the twenty-first century there have been no economic ties between Iran and the US. The discussion of Iran-US economic relations since 1979 develops under the following sub-headings.

##### **a. Iran-US Economic Relations in the 1980s**

As analyzed before, the Shah who was reinstated with the assistance of the CIA in 1953 gave Washington a free-hand to the rich resources of his country while Iran became an important market for US products from luxury things to super-sophisticated weaponry. After the 1979 Iranian Islamic Revolution US lost major oil supplier in the region. The US also lost a vast lucrative market for American-made products as Iran's foreign trade policy was modified and import of unnecessary products was stopped and only essential commodities were imported giving priority to states other than the US and Israel.<sup>56</sup> Additionally, the massive arms purchasing programme from the US begun by the Shah was frozen. As the US was the highest arms supplier to Iran, Islamic Iran's decision of cancelling arms procuring programme came as bolt from the blue to the US economy, in general, and the US arms manufacturing companies in particular since during the Shah's period Iran's petro dollar kept the wheels of US economy moving and so did the arms producing companies. Like the arms manufacturing companies, the US oil companies who had a lion's share in the oil business in Iran also found the door closed for conducting oil business in Iran after 1979. Under the circumstance, the oil companies from the US shifted to Saudi Arabia.<sup>57</sup>

In this context, the first negative gesture in the field of Iran-US economic relations came from the US. Immediately after the Shah's departure from Iran in mid January of 1979, US banks were prepared to cancel Iranian loans contracted in 1977 on the false grounds that Iran had not paid the interest on time. The fact is that Iran had actually paid the interest ahead of time.<sup>58</sup> In fact, from February 1979, the US Department of Treasury had moved with a freeze among the several alternative strategies to contain or to weaken revolutionary Iran economically.<sup>59</sup> Meanwhile, the US Embassy take-over on November 4, 1979 and the subsequent Hostage Crisis of 1979-1981 badly affected Iran-US economic relations like that of political relations. In fact, it damaged whatever limited economic interactions were taking place since 1979. Since the US adopted non-recognition policy with regard to the Islamic Republic of Iran as examined in chapter 4, it conducted a sustained economic war against Iran well before the Embassy take-over on

November 4, 1979 as just stated. American Chase Manhattan Bank also played a leading role in the economic war against Iran. On November 5, 1979, a day after the Embassy take-over Iranian Central Bank had telexed Chase Manhattan Bank of the US instructing them to make the forthcoming interest payment of \$4.05 million due on November 15 from the surplus funds available in their London office. This interest was owed on a \$500 million loan negotiated in January 1977 with the Shah's government. In response, Chase Manhattan made little attempt to communicate with Iran's Central Bank or even to acknowledge receipt of the telex. In addition, in lieu of doing something to enable payment in some currency unaffected by the freeze, it declared the \$500 million loan in default.<sup>60</sup> The leaders of the revolutionary Iran eventually identified the Chase Manhattan Bank as an enemy of the Islamic Republic of Iran.

Other harsh economic measures were also taken by Washington against the Islamic Republic of Iran. When in a press conference held on the morning of November 14, 1979, Iran's acting Foreign Minister Abul Hasan Bani Sadr hinted that his government was considering the withdrawal of Iran's deposits from US banks, the Department of Treasury got alarmed and the Carter administration used the event to justify the seizure of Iranian assets a few hours later. The US government argued that such Tehran's announcement of withdrawals of Iranian funds represented a serious threat to US national security and to the over-all economy of the country. Without delay, President Carter announced the freeze of all Iranian governmental assets in US banks amounting some \$12 billion. Before long, the US banks interpreted the government freeze order to include those US branches located in foreign lands. Additionally, when Iranians demanded the fallen Shah's money deposited in different US banks, the US government tactfully handed about \$10 or \$12 billion in several European branches of Federal Reserve Bank.<sup>61</sup> In clear terms, Iranian bank deposits in US banks, which Carter had thus frozen shortly after the hostages had been taken, eventually became the most important bargaining chip the US had to trade in exchange for the eventual release of the hostages.

In the meantime, the Hostage Crisis led the US to impose various sanctions on Iran. These US-led international sanctions on Iran's oil production, refinery and export facilities had had a profound impact on the structure of its trade and finances. Thus Iran was subjected to an economic boycott by the US on December 12, 1979, and later by the European governments and the governments affiliated with the capitalist bloc from May 14, 1980. These measures effectively isolated Iran economically from the international community and Iran's large market for exports was effectively dried up.<sup>62</sup> Previously, the US government banned oil imports from Iran.<sup>63</sup> Iran's leaders reacted positively by saying that it would break Iran's dependence on the West. They also moved not to sell oil to US companies. This brought about changes in Iran's oil trade pattern including the reduction of its oil production and Iran's turning towards other states

like Turkey and the Soviet bloc states to sell its oil.<sup>64</sup> Economic relations between Iran and the US experienced more hurdles after the US government cut diplomatic ties with Iran on April 7, 1980. This followed by a trade embargo as the US government banned imports from Iran on April 17, 1980. To implement the economic embargo, the US government urged all American companies and private citizens with claims to file them against the assets frozen in November last year. By September 1980, the economic sanctions imposed on Iran by Washington started working and brought negative effects on the Iranian economy. Iran's oil sales which usually provided over 95% of hard currency earnings and over 50% of total government revenue reduced significantly because of US sanctions. This also consolidated anti-American feeling in the post-revolutionary Iran.

Meanwhile, with the help of Algeria both Iran and the US were able to resolve the 444-day long Hostage Crisis peacefully. Iran was able to recover only 25 per cent of their assets US froze when the hostages were taken.<sup>65</sup> The governments of Iran and the US resolved to establish an International Arbitral Tribunal to decide commercial claims raised by US and Iranian companies and by the two governments themselves.<sup>66</sup> Gary Sick has stated that by 1985 Iran had paid US companies nearly \$400 million as the result of international arbitration at the Iran-United States Claims Tribunal at the Hague.<sup>67</sup> Interestingly, despite this state of Iran-US hostile relations, commercial relations between Iran and the US improved to some degree, and in 1981 the two-way trade amounted to \$363 million (although heavily in favour of the US). The situation changed and in 1982, the two-way trade rose to \$706 million in favour of Iran.<sup>68</sup> During the last phase of the Iran-Iraq War when Iran-US relations entered a new phase of confrontation, President Reagan had signed an Executive Order 12613 on October 29, 1987, through which the US imposed a new import embargo on goods that originated from Iran. President Reagan also renewed the economic embargo against Iran in November 1988. Thus US imports from Iran exports to Iran since 1989 were nil.<sup>69</sup>

#### **b. Iran's New Approach to the US in the 1990s**

The leadership in post-Khomeini Iran initiated the First Five-Year Development Plan (1989-1993) and sought for a shift in economic and foreign policy. Under such circumstance, the Islamic Republic of Iran was eager to improve relations with the West, the US in particular. They expressed optimism to improve bilateral political and economic relations with the US. They saw new hope in this regard when on November 3, 1989, the US government agreed to release \$567 million of a reported total of \$810 million of the Iranian assets 'frozen' in 1979. With a view to developing a new politico-economic course with the US, Tehran even tilted towards the US-led coalition during the Gulf crisis of 1990-1991, although its stated policy was neutrality. Meantime, in response to Iran's positive role in the release of Western hostages from Lebanon

the US appeared with some positive gestures. On 18 November 1991, it accepted the Hague tribunal judgment and agreed to pay Iranian assets worth \$275 million which had been frozen during the hostage crisis in 1979-1981. The US also showed willingness to talk about the money amounted \$1 billion that Iran claimed against the US for military purchases during the Shah's time but never delivered. But as time progressed, the US Foreign Operations, Export Financing and Related Programmes Appropriations Act of 1991 made the US blocking of any loan by international funding bodies, such as the International Bank for Reconstruction and Development (IBRD) or the International Monetary Fund (IMF), to Iran obligatory on the grounds that Iran supported international terrorism.<sup>70</sup> What is more, convinced of its own superiority to the rest of the world since the collapse of the Soviet Union in 1991, the US adopted harsher and tougher economic policy toward Iran leaving no hope for improving Iran-US economic relations. Despite Iran's constant approaches towards the US, Washington's trend of imposing sanctions on Iran continued. In October 1992, the US Senate at the suggestion of Senator McCain passed the Iran-Iraq Non-Proliferation Act which became law in October 1993. It extended to Iran the same export and licensing prohibitions imposed on Iraq.

Meanwhile, under pressure from the Republican in Congress the Clinton administration initiated the dual containment policy in May 1993 (elaborated in chapter 5), ostensibly with a view to containing and isolating both Iran and Iraq and cutting them off from the world economic and trading system. According to Edward Shirley, a former Iran specialist at the CIA, the fear of Saddam Hussein was not the primary impetus behind the dual containment policy; rather, it called for collective economic action against the Islamic Republic of Iran.<sup>71</sup> The paradox of US policy towards Iran, however, was that although the dual containment policy was in place, some US companies were still doing business with Iran. Realistically, Washington's economic realities did not go with political aims at least during the mid-1990s. That is why, Washington itself was doing a large volume of business with Tehran. For example, when during the Iran-Iraq War Iran-US relations entered a new phase of confrontation, President Reagan had signed an Executive Order 12613 on October 29, 1987, through which the US imposed a new import embargo on goods that originated from Iran. However, the order technically did not prevent the overseas subsidiaries of US companies from importing them into the US or stop US-based companies from exporting these Iranian goods to other foreign markets elsewhere in the world.<sup>72</sup>

Taking this advantage, Iran resumed oil sales to US companies in early 1991 and the US companies imported very large quantities of Iranian oil and exported many goods to Iran and this continued to the mid-1990s. It is estimated that throughout 1994, Iran exported a daily output of 2.6 million barrels, 23% of which was moved by US companies such as Exxon, Costal, Bay Oil, and Caltex which were contracted to buy 250,000-300,000 barrels, 130,000 barrels, 70,000

barrels, and 60,000 barrels each day respectively. By early 1995, this Iran-US oil trade had grown substantially and the US became largest purchaser of Iran's oil, despite the fact that US imports from Iran had been illegal. One statistics shows that in 1994, trade between Iran and the US totaled \$3.8 billion with an additional \$1.2 billion in goods sold to Iran by US companies through foreign subsidiaries and thus the US became Iran's third largest trading partner, surpassing Italy and France, and became Iran's sixth largest export market. While US exports to Iran increased from none in 1989 to around \$1 billion in 1993, making the US the eighth largest exporter to Iran.<sup>73</sup> US exports to Iran included inertial-navigation equipment, digital computers, computer softwares and radar testing equipment. This clearly shows that in the field of trade and commerce, Iran and US were enjoying comparatively better relations than that of political sphere. This trading activity, conducted between Iran and US partly directly, partly via Abu Dhabi and Dubai was unique in its nature because it starkly contrasted with US official policy. Why was such paradox in Iran-US economic relations while the US dual containment policy was in place? Perhaps, the US feared that given antagonistic Tehran-Washington relations Iran could limp along and find other economic partners such as the Soviet Union, North and South Korea, China, Japan and some European countries in case US would limit access to Western capital and technology and delay economic recovery.

Whatever the US objective in its contradictory position, Iran's President Rafsanjani realized the significance and extent of Iran-US trade relation to the economic recovery of the Islamic Republic of Iran. He concluded that without adding new Western technology and participating in the international capitalist system Iran's economy would not be recovered. Hopeful of secret US economic engagements with Iran, he eventually moved to strike a new economic deal with the US. It was an oil contract worth potentially \$1 billion tried for the first time by the Islamic Republic of Iran. In 1995, when Iran moved to offer this oil deal to a foreign company, many expected that the contract would go to the French energy giant *Total*. Surprisingly, on March 6, 1995, Iran announced that a subsidiary of the US oil concern by the name of *Conoco* had won the contract. Without a doubt, this was the most dramatic and significant sign of Iranian gesture toward the US. President Rafsanjani did it to some degree, by diminishing the importance of Islamic ideology and tried to reaching out the US politically and economically as some experts view. They also view that this was a clear sign from Iran to improve its economic involvement with the US given the fact that Iran's Supreme Leader Ayatullah Khamenei had approved the deal.

Reportedly, to ensure the blessing of the White House, *Conoco* had kept the US government closely informed of its negotiations while the State Department had repeatedly reassured *Conoco* that the White House would approve the deal.<sup>74</sup> But to Israel, to its lobby in the US—the AIPAC

and to anti-Iran officials in the Clinton administration, the deal was a thunderbolt. They viewed that by offering such to US companies, Iran actually tried to undermine the US dual containment policy that had been adopted in 1993. But Israel, its lobby group in the US—the AIPAC—and anti-Iran policymakers in Washington put tremendous pressure on the Clinton administration to close those loopholes as quickly as possible.<sup>75</sup> They increased their lobbying to convince Congress to impose sanctions on Iran and on foreign companies doing business with it. Influenced by Israel, the AIPAC and the Congress on March 14, 1995, President Clinton eventually announced that any deal with Iran was inconsistent with the US policy therefore; the *Conoco* deal “was unacceptable.” Thus, President Clinton canceled the oil deal and stiffened sanctions against Iran. This was followed by issuing an Executive Order 12957 on March 15, 1995, banning all trade and financial transactions between Iran and US individuals or institutions and barring US citizens and companies from financing, supervising, and managing Iran’s oil development.<sup>76</sup>

On May 6, 1995, President Clinton signed a new Executive Order 12959 which was designed by pro-Israeli lobbyist groups and tabled by Republican Congress.<sup>77</sup> The order banned virtually all US trade and all other financial and commercial transactions with Iran, including by the foreign subsidiaries of US corporations. As a consequence, US trade with Iran which reached its zenith only a few days before, dropped to essentially nothing.<sup>78</sup> There is little doubt that US actions baffled completely Iran’s attempt to mend Iran-US economic relations. In reaction to Washington’s sanctions on trade, Iran threatened the US with a lawsuit in the World Court. However, Iran seemed to be conciliatory towards the US and made clear efforts to recognize any peace agreement acceptable to Syria and the Palestinians and announced its commitment not to say or do “anything disruptive to the peace process.” But Washington was no longer in a position to improve its political as well as economic relations with Tehran. Rather, the Clinton administration adopted even more hostile policies towards the Islamic Republic of Iran following the cancellation of the oil deal with Iran. Washington even took measures to prevent Iran from becoming regionally involved. When in 1995, Azerbaijan signed a \$7.4 billion agreement with Western and non-Western oil companies for the exploration for oil in the Caspian Sea, Iran was excluded from being a partner in that agreement under US pressure.<sup>79</sup>

Since the US Congress decided to extend the sanctions’ reach, the Iran-US economic tensions reached to the crisis point and from late 1995 there had been no economic ties of significance between the two countries. According to a Middle East scholar, at the time only two countries in the world thought the embargo strategy was a good idea to contain Iran: the US and Israel.<sup>80</sup> To tighten the embargo further, US Congress unanimously passed the ILSA and President Clinton signed it into law in August 1996. This new law threatened to impose penalties on individuals



and foreign companies making significant investments in, or enhancements to, Iran's petroleum industry. The ILSA was approved aimed at sanctioning non-American foreign companies investing more than \$40 million in Iranian or Libyan energy (oil and gas) sectors. The amount, however, was later reduced to \$20 million.<sup>81</sup> In the ILSA law [which following the sanctions against Libya were lifted in 2008, became known as the Iran Sanctions Act (ISA)<sup>82</sup>] it is stated that companies that violated the ban and proceeded to invest in Iranian oil fields would be barred from any commercial transactions in the US. Consequently, for nearly a year afterward, no one touched Iran's oil fields although they were highly lucrative. In August 1997, President Clinton issued a third executive order that put an end to the loopholes in the embargo whereby goods were being exported to Iran from third countries. These executive orders and ILSA provided the general outlines of the Iranian trade restrictions. Thus by 1997, Washington was neither in a position to lessen the grip of already tightened economic sanctions on Iran, nor was willing to take a dramatic steps—such as lifting of those sanctions that would give the Iranian economy and Khatami's presidency a boost. Although since 1997 under President Khatami, Iran tried to break the pressure of US economic sanctions on its vital oil and gas sector by reaching the Western countries and inviting European, Russian and Asian companies to develop offshore fields, however, everywhere the Iranians went they found 'the Americans there first, trying to convince people not to deal with' them.<sup>83</sup>

True, the broad thrust of Secretary of State Madeleine Albright's speech in 2000, was positive from political and economic point of view when she announced that the Clinton administration planned to ease an embargo on the importation of some Iranian consumer goods, among them carpets, nuts, dried fruit, and caviar. In her speech although Albright announced that "a step that will enable Americans to purchase and import carpets and food products such as dried fruits, nuts and caviar from Iran," she clearly indicated that unless Iranian "policies change, fully normal ties between our governments will not be possible, and our principle sanctions will remain."<sup>84</sup> To some, this appeared to be an unprecedented move from the US, since for almost two decades there had been nothing in Washington's policy toward Iran besides creating new sanctions without softening its position on Iran. As a result of the relaxation of import sanctions allowing in Iranian pistachios, rugs and a small number of other items, Iran-US trade relations improved a little bit when US exports rose about \$9 million of goods and imports from Iran reached about \$51 million.<sup>85</sup> Despite these gestures, economic sanctions and other impediments put by the US and unwillingness of the Clinton administration to lift them prevented Iran from improving its overall relations with the US during the last years of President Clinton.

**c. Iran-US Economic Relations since 2001**

The Clinton administration was succeeded by the new anti-Bush administration which showed no willingness to mend its relations with Iran. During the last days of the Clinton administration in late 2000 some leading US oil companies, such as ExxonMobil, Chevron, and Conoco, were seen to maintain contacts with the National Iranian Oil Company and top Iranian officials in the high expectation that US sanctions would be dropped or significantly relaxed in the near future.<sup>86</sup> The improved political relations between Iran and the US towards the end of the Clinton administration provided this hope to the US companies. When anti-Iran President George Bush came into office in 2001, this hope dashed away. The Bush administration from the very beginning tried to weaken the Islamic regime by reinforcing the prevailing sanctions against Iran. Additionally, it successfully blocked loans and other assistance from the World Bank and IMF. The Bush administration also successfully did block Iran's membership in the WTO for which Iran submitted an application in 1996.

Meanwhile, influenced by Israel, its lobby in the US—the AIPAC, and neoconservative supporters of Israel in the US, President Bush signed into law the ILSA Extension Act of 2001, in August 2001. This provided for a five-year extension of the ILSA which was to expire in 2006. The US intention behind the extension of ILSA's life was to pressure European and other countries to follow Washington's economic policy towards Iran. In line with such measure, the Bush administration vigorously enforced sanctions. For example, in 2002, the Houston-based oil-field services company BS & B Process Systems was fined almost \$1 million by the US Department of Commerce for illegally exporting oil-field equipment to Iran. Reportedly, the company had made the sales to Iran in April 1996 for a sum that was far less than the fines imposed in 2002. This demonstrates that to prevent further economic interactions with Iran the Bush administration penalized the company as a warning to others.<sup>87</sup>

In 2004, the Japanese holding company INPEX agreed to a deal to help Iran's Petroleum Engineering and Development Company which was developing the southern Azdegan oil field. Two years later, due to the US diplomatic pressure Japan withdrew its company from Iran.<sup>88</sup> It is said that at US instigation, Western Banks cut back dealings with Iran in late 2006 and early 2007. While US allies Japan and European governments reduced credits financing their exports to Iran. Meanwhile, in March 2006, President Bush renewed the ILSA after a five year duration from 2001. Next year a new bill by the name of Iran Sanctions Enabling Act of 2007 was also passed by the US government. The bill enabled state pension funds to divest assets from companies investing in Iran's energy sector. This actually kept other countries and companies from fully committing to Iranian ventures. The US also imposed several rounds of sanctions on Iran over its nuclear programme from July 2006 as mentioned in the previous chapter. As the

tension between Iran and the US continued over Iran's nuclear programme, Washington imposed sanctions on foreign firms trading with Iran in May, 2011. A month later the US imposed economic sanctions on Iran's national Airline, saying that Iran Air had supported the Iranian Revolutionary Guard.<sup>89</sup> Amidst tensions, Iran warned that it might shut the Strait of Hormuz if the West imposed more sanctions over its nuclear programme. In an instant response, in late December 2011, a US Fifth Fleet spokeswoman said it was "always ready to counter malevolent actions".<sup>90</sup>

Almost at the same time, President Obama signed into law a major defence bill including tough new sanctions against Iran which would cut off from the US financial system foreign firms that do business with Iran's central bank. Under the new law, other countries had to demonstrate every six months that they were meaningfully reducing consumption of Iranian oil or face sanctions themselves. Former Secretary of State Hillary Clinton in her book has claimed that the result of these sanctions was dramatic since inflation in Iran soared by more than 40 percent, and the value of the Iranian currency declined, while oil exports declined from 2.5 million barrels of crude each day in early 2012 to around 1 million, which resulted in a loss of more than \$80 billion in revenue.<sup>91</sup> In 2013, the US government prohibited nearly all trade and investment with Iran by US persons, but maintained broad authorizations and exceptions that allow for the sale of food, medicine, and medical devices by US persons or from the US to Iran. The US government argued that sanctions had been imposed on Iran because of its sponsorship of terrorism, its refusal to comply with international obligations on its nuclear programme, and its human rights violations.<sup>92</sup> But following the interim nuclear deal signed in November 2013, the US investors began softening their attitude towards Iran. In late May 2014, *The Washington Post* reported that for the first time in decades, business people from the US paid a visit to Iran in significant numbers who explored the possibility of future partnerships as Iranian and American entrepreneurs begin to envision a reopening of long-closed commercial channels. The report stated: "Although sanctions blocking most types of trade between the two countries remain in place, there are no bans on travel to Iran. For U.S. citizens granted a visa to Iran, local hosts can organize programs, which have included recent visits to invest."<sup>93</sup> In this context, the 2015 nuclear deal between Iran and the P5+1 was concluded which has created more opportunities for future Iran-US economic interactions.

As a matter of fact, during the 1979-2015 period, US economic relations with Iran were 'one of the most centrally planned, government-controlled economic relationships in the world'. During this time, the rest of the world had adopted a different political and economic approach towards Iran than the one chosen by the US. Consequently, the US has failed in its attempt to effectively isolate Iran from the world community. Without a doubt, Iran's huge natural resource was one of

the important reasons.<sup>94</sup> Thus, the US has been witnessing how despite Washington's policy of isolation, the status and power of Iran has been increasing in the world arena. Recently, the US power has already been undermined or at least has been challenged, to some degree, by the influence of Iran's oil in a number of ways. For example, Washington's strategic rivals including China and Russia are being economically fueled by Iranian resources taking narrow scope of and loopholes of sanctions. But with a population of more than sixty million, Iran itself has offered a lucrative market for the US. Moreover, Iran is strategically located between the world's two largest reservoirs of oil and natural gas: the Persian Gulf and the Caspian Sea. In fact, given these above-mentioned geo-strategic and economic considerations, along with political calculations regarding Iran's nuclear programme led the Obama administration to strike a nuclear deal on July 14, 2015 with Iran. After signing the deal the prospect of Iran's economic relations with the US surfaced considerably. The process of opening up Iran's upstream oil and gas sectors especially following the lifting of US and international sanctions in mid-January 2016 imposed on the country since 1979 has tremendously enhanced the hope to rebuild the nation taking the advantage of improving Iran's relations with the US and the international community. In essence, lifting of all sanctions from Iran has further encouraged foreign (perhaps the US as well) investment in Iran, facilitating and accelerating the country's reintegration into the international economic system and thus improving Iran-US economic relations in line with diplomatic and political relations of the two countries.

This came true when in December 2016, Iran concluded a \$16.6bn deal with US Boeing company for 10 years. The deal included 50 of the 737 MAX 8 aircraft, and 15 of the 777-300 ERs planes plus 15 777-9s jets and it is the biggest US-Iran deal since the 1979 Islamic revolution. Boeing later confirmed that the deal had been approved by the US government and the first aircraft are scheduled for delivery in 2018.<sup>95</sup> However, the new Trump administration (2017- ) from the very beginning has taken anti-Iran stance and has been imposing new sanctions on Iran, leaving the chances of Iran-US economic relations very poor.

### **Conclusion**

Iran-US economic relationship dates as far as back in 1856. However, a workable economic bond of a kind had undeniably developed only since 1945. After the 1953 coup d'état in Iran, this Iran-US economic bond strengthened considerably in line with the political and cultural relations. As a result, both countries benefitted from their economic interactions. Iranian markets became the lucrative venues for the American businessmen, investors, bankers and other money-makers, while Iran used to provide oil wealth to US capitalists allies, made money and catapulted his country to a modern nation. What is more, for long-term Iranian economic development and ties with the US, Iran became a fine market for US capital investments. This massively benefitted the

US which was reflected in John P. Miglietta's informed words: "The result of the United States relationship with Iran was a windfall for Wall Street."<sup>96</sup> As the large part of this mutual economic benefit went to the US, it produced anti-American feelings among the Iranians. The Iranians who witnessed US economic exploitation since the 1954 oil arrangement ventilated their anti-American feelings during the 1979 Islamic Revolution.

Iran-US economic relations since 1979 are not eventful. Yet, during this time, the US has maintained economic sanctions against Iran and restrained Iran's access to world markets and denied the access of its oil and gas potentials. The US has also denied badly needed foreign investment to update and modernize Iran's energy infrastructures and overall economic development. In clear terms, the US has frustrated Iran's economic development again and again through sanctions, and direct threats to neighbor states and other Iran's trading partners in the globe who wish to collaborate and cooperate with Iran on development projects. This US economic policy towards Iran placed the US on a long-term enemy of Iran. Essentially, the different sets of US economic sanctions (up to 2012) imposed on Iran have acted as a main obstacle towards a rapprochement between the two countries. The lifting and removal of all debilitating sanctions from January 17, 2016, will help Iran to re-enter the global economy.<sup>97</sup> Iran's President Hassan Rouhani who termed lifting of sanctions as 'golden page' in country's history, made multi-city tour in Europe immediately after the lifting of sanctions. He first visited Italy and concluded a \$18 billion deal. Earlier Chinese leader visited Tehran and made a \$6 billion deal with Iran. Thus in the new scene while China and Europe will take advantage, US companies will face some problems because of Washington's fresh sanctions (imposed on Iran immediately after lifting the old ones), although hopes are current that they are likely to enter Iran's economy through their subsidiaries which means opening a new chapter in Iran-US economic relations. These hopes depend on the economic policy of the present Trump administration towards Iran.

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13. Mostafa Elm, *Oil, Power and Principle: ... , op., cit.*, pp. 53-55; *The Middle East in World Affairs, op., cit.*, p. 187.
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36. Peter Avery, *Modern Iran, op., cit.*, p. 474.
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  39. Jahangir Amuzegar, 'The Iranian Economy before and after the Revolution', *Middle East Journal*, Vol. 46, No. 3, 1992, p. 414; Kenneth M. Pollack, *The Persian Puzzle: ..., op., cit.*, pp. 83-84.
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  94. Roger Howard, *Iran Oil: op., cit.*, p. 9. Besides, Iran's former Supreme Leader Ayatullah Imam Khomeini himself taught his fellow countrymen how to fight economic hardship caused by Islamic Iran's number one enemy—the US. On November 2, 1979, Khomeini said: As for economic pressure, we are a people accustomed to hunger. Assuming that the Americans can impose an economic embargo on us by persuading all nations to sacrifice their own interests—which is nothing more than an idle dream, something that will never happen—we can always fast, or content ourselves with the barely and corn that we sow on our own land. That will be enough for us. We eat meat only one day a week, and in fact, it is not good to eat meat. If necessary, we can even restrict ourselves to one meal a day. So they should not try to intimidate us with economic pressure. If we are faced with the choice of preserving our honour or filling our stomachs, naturally we will prefer to go hungry and keep our honour. Imam Khomeini, *Islam and Revolution*, *op., cit.*, p. 285.
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# Chapter 7

## Iran-US Cultural Relations Since 1945

This chapter will shed light on the Iran-US cultural relations since 1945. However, the chapter also briefly looks into the cultural relations between Iran and the US that began 1830 as background study. The discussion of this chapter progresses in the following ways:

- A. The Historical Background**
- B. Development and Evolution of Iran-US Cultural Relations: 1945-1979**
- C. A New Phase of Cultural Hostility since 1979**

### **A. The Historical Background**

The history of Iran-US cultural relations preceded both the opening of full bilateral economic (1856) and political and diplomatic (1883) relations between Tehran and Washington. History documents that cultural ties between Iran and US began with the arrival of American Protestant missionaries in Tabriz in Iran on December 18, 1830. The missionary group included Harrison Gray, Otis Dwight, Eli Smith and their leaders Justin Perkins and Dr. Asahel Grant, a physician. They were followed by Reverend Justin Perkins, D. D. who along with his wife arrived in 1834, and Asahel Grant M. D. (1807-1844), a medical doctor (and his wife) in 1835. They all came to Iran with two goals: to convert the natives (i.e., Shi'i Muslims, Assyrian and Nestorian Christians to Protestantism) to Christianity and to provide them modern amenities (which included medicine, education etc.).<sup>1</sup> Over time, with the arrival of an increased number of missionaries in Iran, the evangelization programme got a huge impetus. The missionaries established churches, schools and hospitals, but soon they found that it was difficult to convert Shi'i Muslims to American-style Protestant Christianity. This difficulty led them to confine their attempts of proselytizing to non-Muslims (especially the Assyrians or Nestorians) and to several other humanitarian activities by opening schools and building hospitals in Iran.

Before long, the schools and hospitals that had been established by the American missionaries became centres for the diffusion of Western culture in Iran and at the same these began to create reputation for the Americans in Iran. One historian has claimed that during their first twenty-five years in Iran, the missionaries made significant contributions to the health, education, and overall social well-being of the Iranians they served.<sup>2</sup> The missionary schools helped a lot to improve the social standards of Iran while the missionaries gave Iranians an elevated image of Americans and the US, an image which surprisingly attracted a great many of Iranians. Because of the pro-people and beneficent nature of their activities the missionaries earned respect of the Iranians.

The activities of the missionaries also helped a lot to bring two far-distanced countries to come close in terms of diplomacy. These early cultural ties between the two countries helped to enhance US standing in the Iranian popular imagination.<sup>3</sup> Realizing the practical, visible and long-term benefits of the various services rendered by the missionaries, the Iranian government took keen and considerable interest in the missionary activities, particularly in opening schools and establishing hospitals which were imparting education and providing health caring among the Iranians. The Iranian government was seen pleased and in line with its policy of trying to persuade the political and economic support of US, it did everything possible to accommodate the American missionaries in Iran.

It was in this context, a number of Iranian and American individuals were seen to undertake life-long mission to promote Iran-US cultural relations during this early period. Among the Iranians, Haji Hussein Quli Khan Motamed-ul-Vezareh, the Iranian Minister in Washington was able to spark an interest in Iran among American academia, and a number of Iranologists through his writings and by dint of his friendly attitude, sociable nature, and peculiarities of character. His mission for the promotion of the Iran-US cultural relations continued throughout the 1880s. Influenced by Haji Hussein, an American Orientalist and an Iranologist by the name of Abraham Valentine William Jackson (1862-1937) did a great deal to further the study of the Iranian history and culture. A Professor of Indo-Iranian Languages at Columbia University until his death in 1937, William Jackson developed an unprecedented passion for the study of Iranian literature and religions. A contemporary of Jackson Professor Arthur Upham Pope (1861-1969) also made significant contribution to strengthen the cultural bridge between Iran and the US. A pioneering American expert on Persian art, Arthur made at least 10 trips of study and research within Iran during the period, 1925-1939. He founded *The American Institute for Persian Art and Archeology* in 1930. This was the first bi-national cultural centre, better known as *The Iranian Institute*, with its headquarters in New York. The goal of this centre was to make known to the people of both countries, their social, scientific, literary, cultural, educational, commercial and industrial lives; to promote relations between the two peoples; to guide and assist students who wanted to go to the US to study and vice versa. In 1930 Arthur published *An Introduction to Persian Art since the Seventh Century A.D.*, which was the first substantial volume in any language dealing with the arts and crafts of Iran as a whole. Because of his persistent undertakings Arthur Upham Pope was highly regarded for upholding the Iranian culture to the world arena. Badi Badiozamani and Ghazal Badiozamani have aptly described, “No person, be he Iranian, European, or American, has done so much to spread and popularize throughout the world information regarding the high qualities of Iranian culture and art as has Professor Arthur Pope.”<sup>4</sup>

Another American by the name of Dr. Samuel Jordan (1871-1952) was also seen to play outstanding role in promoting Iran-US cultural relations. Considered as “the Father of Modern Education” in Iran, Jordan made a lasting impression on the history of Iran-US cultural relations. Justice William O. Douglas of the US described him as the man who did more to create goodwill between Iran and the US than any other man.<sup>5</sup> Other outstanding scholars and missionaries, both male and female, of America were also seen to follow the footsteps of the aforesaid luminaries in the mission of highlighting Iranian culture as well as furthering Iran-US cultural link. Professor Erich Schmidt (1930-1940) of the Oriental Institute of the University of Chicago and his wife Mary Helen Warden Schmidt, female legendary missionaries Annie Stocking Boyce (1880-1973), Helen Augusta Clarke (1811-1887, also known as Helen Young since her marriage with T. Cuyler Young), Annie Montgomery, Jane Doolittle, and Grace Dreyfus were prominent also left deep positive imprints in the sands of Iran-US relations.<sup>6</sup> Iran-US cultural contacts were accomplished by other means also. Following the Constitutional Revolution of 1906 a number of young men went to US to study. Since 1925 Reza Shah was determined to Westernize Iran. The need for the creation of a Western-style state resulted in increased demand for education in Western techniques. This actually led Reza Shah to his dependence more on the US and other European nations. Since 1926 he instituted a programme of Government scholarships abroad and since then he used to send about one hundred Iranian students each year to US and European nations for study. They acquired skills and knowledge needed by the nation. After spending few years and taking an active part in American life they returned to Iran to give talks or to write about America, thus presenting American culture to the Iranians. In 1935, the Iranian army also sent a group to the US to undergo technical training. Years later in March, 1943, the Iranian-American Cultural Relations Society was reactivated in order to facilitate cultural exchange between the two countries.<sup>7</sup> Thus the overall cultural relations that prevailed between Iran and the US up to 1945 were almost cordial and they were of utmost importance for development and evolution of Iran-US cultural (as well as economic and political) relations in the later period.

#### **B. Development and Evolution of Iran-US Cultural Relations: 1945-1979**

Iran-US cultural contacts between 1945 and 1979 are very important for the development of Iran-US political and economic relations of this period. As examined previously, during WWII Iran became more important to the US politically and economically. Consequently, by war’s end in 1945 when Iran-US political relations began to crystallize for a consolidated and concrete form and Iran-US economic relations were experiencing slow improvements, Iran-US cultural relations witnessed another degree of improvement. Since 1945 the US government assisted many Iranians who were in the US for modern education and for training on modern educational

knowledge. Most of them stayed abroad, while rest returned to Iran with modern and advanced ideas and American values.<sup>8</sup> Many books by American authors were translated into Persian and published in Tehran. In this respect, preference was given to works dealing with education, medicine, and the social sciences. Some fiction like Dale Carnegie's *How to Win Friends and Influence People* was also translated. The key goal of this move was to penetrate American ideas and values into Iranian society. Along with these works, American periodicals created a place in Iranian educated society. Current issues of *The Reader's Digest*, *The Saturday Evening Post*, *Collier's*, *Time*, *Life*, *Vogue* and other periodicals were in great demand in Iran since early 1950s.

In the field of communication, American cars, automobiles, buses, trains, and trucks represented the standard means of travel and transport within Iran. The easy availability of dependable spare parts at a reasonable price also created a general confidence in US industry among the Iranians. When the Mutual Defense Aid Programme began in Iran in 1950, years later it brought hundreds of US technicians, experts and advisors into daily and close contact with many Iranians in various important sectors of their economy, leaving permanent legacy on Iran-US cultural arena. They were seen busy in working hard to raise wheat yields, to fight diseases like, malaria, to train teachers, to build mills (for example, textile mills), as well as to develop sanitary water systems. Such programmes won the appreciation and goodwill of those Iranians who were well aware of them and thus Western ideas and values were making progress in Iranian society that ultimately invited anti-American feelings in Iran. The CIA-orchestrated coup d'état of 1953 opened an immense opportunity of US cultural influence in Iran side by side with US political and economic influence. Following the 1953 coup, the anti-Soviet Shah became fully dependent on the West (in particular the US), meaning his association with the West and its culture. The dependence of the Shah and his country on the Western culture was also due to the Shah's own goal to modernize his country. Therefore, after 1953 attempts were taken to bring a radical change in Iranian mind-set, society, religion and state affairs in line with the Western pattern. Scholars view that the extensive US involvement in Iranian affairs brought with it a great increase in Western socio-cultural influences in Iran and this influence consolidated the overall structure of Iran's dependence on and vulnerability to the US. As a consequence, Iranian socio-economic as well as cultural development and foreign policy objectives became closely tied to the interests of the US and other capitalist countries.<sup>9</sup>

In effect, since 1953, the Shah became the chief patron of Western culture and values in Iran. In view of Iran's geo-strategic importance, the US also wanted cultural relationship with the country in conjunction with close political and economic relations. Being aware of 'latent Iranian xenophobia' toward the US because of Washington's demonic involvement in the 1953 coup d'état, the Eisenhower administration recognized that it needed an effective informational and

cultural programme to remove misgivings regarding the US so that Iranians might not view the Shah's reforms as American.<sup>10</sup> In this context, in 1954, an American organization called the Franklin Institute opened a branch in Tehran. The main objectives of the Institute were to encourage and pay for the translation into Persian from English of American books including technical and literary persuasion. An Imperial Foundation for Translation and Publishing was established in Tehran modeled on the Franklin Institute. The operations of both the Franklin Institute and Imperial Foundation improved the book production and gave a great impetus to the book trade between Iran and the US. This ultimately resulted in exchanging the values of one country with the other and enhancing the cultural interactions.

American privately sponsored projects like the Iran Foundation and the Lafayette College consortium made huge contribution to Iran-US cultural bondage in the initial phase of close relations since 1953. The Iran Foundation funded the Shiraz Medical Center which improved the Iranian healthcare of the day. While the Lafayette College consortium was charged with the development of a technical college in Abadan which in turn brought a radical change in the education sector of Iran. For its involvement in the 1953 coup d'état, the US gained the epithet of the "ugly American." The US Peace Corps volunteers were therefore in Iran to restore the badly needed credibility. Therefore, the promotion of Iran-US cultural bondage was also done by the US Peace Corps programme. In 1962, forty-three US Peace Corps volunteers began to arrive in Iran to reinforce the new American reform emphasis. They were followed by nearly 2,000 others American. They all moved into the Iranian countryside where they lived and worked with the Iranian people. To an analyst, this programme had a strong, positive impact in Iran and on overall Iran-US cultural relations since it was targeted at a different constituency, the lower and middle classes. Another US project named the US Ford Foundation provided Iran with technicians needed to help prepare the country's Third Development Plan that started in 1962. The Ford Foundation also carried on other valuable projects such as vocational education and village development in addition to the translation of a standard American Encyclopedia into Persian. Thus American influence began to be felt in Iranian literature and culture though in the form of anti-intellectual and anti-communist ideology of the US.<sup>11</sup> Meantime, in April 1958 the Shah established a non-profit-making organization to co-ordinate a group of social services. This was the *Bonyad-i-Pahlavi*, or the Pahlavi Foundation and it was founded modeled on US Rockefeller and Ford Foundation. The Pahlavi Foundation's Institute for Publication and Translation of Books did a great deal to stimulate cultural development as well as to promote international understanding. It published in translation a number of great literary classics of the East and the West, thus accelerating the cultural development between Iran and Western countries, the US in particular.

A programme named Fulbright Act was in operation in Iran also contributed a lot to the development of Iran-US cultural relations during the 1953-1979 period. Established following an agreement between Iran and the US signed on September 1, 1949, the Fulbright Programme became inactive after few years because of shortage of fund. On February 20, 1956, Iran and the US inked an agreement and one of the most beneficial effects of this agreement was the activation of the Fulbright Programme in Iran on November 25, 1957. The new agreement of 1956 made the funds available and provided for the expenditure during the first year of the programme of the equivalent of \$250,000 in *rials* for the exchange of students, teachers, lecturers, research scholars, and specialists between Iran and the US. Under this well-known Fulbright Act and related legislation, the US government gave Iran technical assistance and Iranian research scholars, secondary-school teachers, and post-graduate students used to go to the US, while US university lecturers, secondary-school teachers, and students came to Iran to enrich the academic atmosphere here.<sup>12</sup> On October 24, 1963, a new agreement for cultural exchange was signed placing the programme on firmer ground. The two countries declared their intention at the very beginning to “promote further mutual understanding” by means of “a wider exchange of knowledge and professional talents through educational contacts.” R. K. Ramazani has concluded that perhaps more than any other single programme it was a generator of good will between Iran and the US.<sup>13</sup>

As the Iran-US political and economic relations evolved, the American ideas and values penetrated also in the administrative affairs of Iran. With US aid Iran established an Institute for Public and Business Administration attached to the University of Tehran in 1954. The Institute offered training in administrative skills which were very important to the socio-economic and cultural development of Iran.<sup>14</sup> In 1960, after an extensive study of two years, a US government reorganization commission by the name of Hoover helped the Iranian government to prepare a comprehensive set of reorganization recommendations regarding a sound administration. The Shah’s government welcomed and accepted the move which later established the basic organization of the most of the major ministries and agencies of Iranian government. Other ministries and agencies were also for the most part organized along modern lines, especially on the US pattern. Iran also passed and introduced two anti-corruption laws modeled on the US and Britain. New vigour was injected into government departments by bringing new talents from US and other Western countries into Iran.

Since 1958 the Shah used to make press conferences, a practice, as viewed by many Iran scholars, may have been copied from those of US President. The Shah generally focused on strengthening of Iran-US military relations through US military aid and he frequently said that he was keen to send Iranians to the US to be trained to use sophisticated military equipment. The

Iranian army which had been trained by US military advisors and experts since 1943 became closely attached with the US military after 1953. Since the Shah was important purchaser of US arms for his military, he used to send a large number of Iran's students, military officers, pilots and nuclear scientists and engineers to US for training and for exposing to Western ideas and bringing back them to Iran.<sup>15</sup> Well-known Iranian entrepreneurs including Chosroshahi, Lajevardi and Elghanian family helped much to revolutionize Iranian everyday life on Western pattern. Another business magnet by the name of Habibollah Sabet Pasa literally created the Iranian *PEPSI-COLA* generation. He usually imported soft drinks, cars and television from the US. The middle-class and upper-class elite in Tehran got some degree of taste for a Westernized lifestyle as they had disposable income to spend on such products of America.<sup>16</sup>

Americans who lived in Iran began changing the way of Iranian lives in different ways. They lived in Iran as they lived in New Jersey, California, Nebraska or Massachusetts. They lived in Tehran in cellophane-wrapped clusters. They imported everything they could buy from the US. Air conditioners, humidifiers, and deodorants, as well as American recreation and education, were emphasized to the total exclusion of their local environment. Sometimes, American recreation in Iran caused strong anti-Americanism as examined in chapter 3. In the field of entertainment, American films were shown in the local cinema houses in Iran in large numbers. In this way, the cinema, theatre, radio and television and even the press were seen promoting Western culture in general and American culture in particular in Iran. A US citizen named Vance Hallack, assisted by a number of fellow Americans (who also trained other Iranian staff) was responsible for opening television channel in Iran in October 1958. It is pertinent to mention here that television of Iran was the first commercial station in the Middle East. The programming of the television station consisted of imported serials and Hollywood films from the US. Although there were domestic productions; they were heavily influenced by American formats.

In fact, the television programmes promoted Western values, culture, and life-style that were overtly displayed in advertising and more subtly revealed in the depiction of lifestyle in the imported films (mostly Hollywood-produced) and serials. Thus the television media played an important role in the transformation of urban, and soon to follow, rural Iranian social and cultural life of the day. Over time, when the pro-Western Shah promoted Western-style film including pornographic movies, these and other pro-Western radio and TV programmes considerably helped limit local and popular theatre to villages and small towns. Along with these programmes, the Shah put limits on folk theatre by demanding licenses, scripts and so forth.<sup>17</sup> As the American films, TV serials began impacting and influencing Iranian socio-cultural lives, styles of clothing, make-up, walking, eating, meetings, balls, luxuries and even the naming of children, avenues, streets and shops in imitation of the West were rapidly becoming a habit for the people of Iran.

Women of the court and the aristocrats used to travel to US and other European countries for having their dresses made, their hair done or for make-up. They invited exclusive hair-stylers and dress-makers from those foreign countries. These activities introduced Iran more closely to the American society. However, the negative aspects of Western culture became evident in Iranian society and the Iranians reacted angrily and violently during the 1979 Islamic Revolution. Since early 1960, Iran's educational system, an important aspect of the Iranian culture, was totally dependent upon the West, the US in particular. New universities modeled on the American lines (for example, the Pahlavi University of Shiraz, 1962) were established in Iran. The university texts were adapted from the West and even many of their professors and teachers of the universities came from Europe and America. The educational philosophy was brought from the universities of America.<sup>18</sup> The Iranian government continued to send hundreds of Iranian students to America every year who enjoyed their stay there and acquired multidimensional educational knowledge and working experience.

The American Friends of the Middle East through its Tehran office counseled hundreds of Iranian students each year with regard to the selection of their fields of study and relevant colleges and universities. Student migration to US continued to increase. It is estimated that in 1958-1959 about 3,700 Iranian students went to the US for educational purposes.<sup>19</sup> Another estimate shows that in 1960 some 14,000 Iranian students were studying abroad. Of the total, about 4,000 were enrolled in the US alone the remainders were studying in West Germany, Britain, France, Austria, and other European countries. By late 1970s Iranians (mostly students) resided in the US grew in greater numbers and by 1977 about 60,000 Iranian students—the cultural ambassadors of Iran resided in the US.<sup>20</sup> Another estimate shows that between 1963 and 1979, 26 percent of Iranian ministers were modern educated who had received their degrees in the US. Without a doubt, this demonstrates Iran's close cultural orientation with the US. During the years between 1953 and 1979, the major contact point in cultural field between Iran and the US was the Iran-American Society (hereinafter IAS). Founded in 1925, in Tehran, the IAS had become the largest bi-national centre in the world. The IAS which consisted of a cultural centre, an academic centre usually set the positive and progressive programmes aimed at strengthening cultural ties between Iranians and Americans.<sup>21</sup> Its Cultural Centre in Tehran eventually became a gathering place for Iranian students and intellectuals in the 1960s. They were drawn by the liberalizing influence of American culture on Iran while its office in Washington D.C., arranged educational exchanges for Iranian students. The Cultural Centres in Tehran and Isfahan were shut down in November, 1979 following the US Embassy attack.

United States Information Service (hereinafter USIS) through its Tehran centre played an important role in the field of Iran-US cultural relationship during the 1953-1979 period. It was at



the USIS where Americans were in close touch with the younger generation of Iran's opinion leaders. According to James A. Bill, most of America's serious contacts with the challenging intelligentsia represented by writers, poets, journalists, academics, and students existed through USIS. Reportedly, USIS officials occasionally developed innovative and impressive programmes that emboldened cultural ties between the two countries.<sup>22</sup> It is said that Empress Farah's keen interests in education, culture, and the arts enabled her to develop strong ties with American academics, artists, musicians, librarians, and writers. Her influence increased considerably in the mid-1970s and was furthered by her close relationship with the Aspen Institute<sup>23</sup> (particularly for its Iran Programme), through which influential Americans from all walks of life participated in conferences in both Iran and the US. Empress Farah even took measures to grant \$750,000 from the Pahlavi Foundation (which she represented) to the Aspen Institute with a view to strengthening the Iran-US cultural ties.<sup>24</sup> In September 1975 an elaborate conference held at Persepolis in cooperation with the Empress's office. At that time the Aspen Institute invited a wide assortment of Americans considered influential. They included Iran specialists, academics and policy-makers, educational administrators, businessmen, pollsters, Congressmen and journalists.

There is no dispute that since 1953 there developed close cultural relationship between Iran and the US in line with political and economic relations. The deep cultural ties between Iran and the US left both positive and negative effects on Iranian society. The negative aspects of Iran-US cultural relations eventually resulted in anti-Americanism in Iran (examined elaborately in section V of chapter 3). This anti-Americanism was the most important factor of the 1979 Islamic Revolution which ultimately put an abrupt end to the Iran-US cultural relations along with political and economic relations of the two countries.

### **C. A New Phase of Cultural Hostility since 1979**

Since the collapse of the US-backed Shah's rule in 1979, relations between Iran and US deteriorated rapidly. A sort of hostile political, economic and cultural relationship that started between Iran and the US in 1979, is still existed. Unlike the political and economic relations, Iran-US cultural relations since 1979 are less interactive, therefore, little can be said about Iran's cultural relations with US during this period. As noted in chapter 3 that the 1979 Islamic Revolution is also a cultural revolution taken place against Iran's whole-sale adoption of Western culture under the US-backed Shah. Therefore, the 1979 Islamic Revolution has become the basis of Islamic Republic of Iran's outlook toward the US. Particularly, the Leader of the Islamic Revolution Ayatullah Imam Khomeini saw the Western concept of freedom as dissolving Iranian social institutions. Once he remarked: "They want the gambling casinos to remain freely open, the bars to be freely open, the fleshpots ... heroin addicts ... opium addicts." Khomeini

denounced such things as “mixed bathing, cinemas designed to drag [the people] to corruption,” arguing that “this would emasculate our youth and make them indifferent to political and spiritual affairs.”<sup>25</sup> For that he emphasized that Iranian culture must fight against Westernization, the Americanization in particular. In fact, Khomeini and his associates saw “American culture as the single greatest threat to Islamic government and way of life.”<sup>26</sup>

During the Pahlavi era the ruling elite in Iran were entirely Westernized and secular. With the establishment of the Islamic Republic of Iran following the victory of the Islamic Revolution in 1979 this socio-cultural and religious landscape fundamentally changed since the revolutionary Iran rejected the Western influences in every sector outright. The leadership of the Islamic Republic of Iran has little love for the American (Western) way of life. Islamic Iran denounces Western culture in general, and the American culture in particular, since this culture considers man a machine and knows no other mission for him other than hedonism, sex, frivolity and nihilism. Revolutionary Iran also views the Western culture as false and misleading one and argues that the basic motivation behind the Islamic Revolution of Iran was the revival of Islam, the establishment of an Islamic government and the enforcement of Allah’s laws as laid down in the Holy Qur’an. Given, current cultural battle between Iran and the US is a battle between Iranian Islamic values versus US Christian values and free and open society, a battle between Iran’s Islamic theocracy versus US secular democracy.

It is pertinent to relate that while the US viewed its Embassy takeover in Tehran as a terrorist act on the part of the Islamic regime, many Iranians argued that the students’ take-over of the US Embassy aimed at obliterating the channel of Western domination in Iran or the international cultural imperialism in Iran. Therefore, on the surface, the US Embassy take-over appears to be a political problem, but in fact it is more related to the cultural aspect of the Islamic Revolution. Given this fact, the hostage crisis was one of the most significant consequences of the rejection of Western influence in Iran. From this point of view, the occupation of the “American Spy Nest in Tehran” was more of a cultural event than a political one.<sup>27</sup> To maintain a distinction between Iranian culture and the American culture Khomeini used four anti-American phrases: a) America is the Great Satan; b) America is corrupt; c) America is a hollow drum; d) America can’t do a damn thing. At the time, these phrases actually became a part of the daily language of the Iranian people. Culturally these phrases were humiliating for a superpower like the US. Therefore, this badly affected overall Iran-US political, economic and cultural relations in the post-1979 period. Prior to the Islamic Revolution Iran witnessed the hegemony of Western culture. After the Islamic Revolution, Iranian revolutionary leadership engaged in a drive to rid society of all American or Western influences. To that end, in June 1980, Khomeini formed a “Cultural Revolution” committee and assigned it to guide the Cultural Revolution in establishing an

educational system based upon Islamic teachings. The committee sought to reshape Iran's university curriculum in ways acceptable to the new Islamic government. As noted above, during the Shah's regime, Iran's educational system was mostly dependent upon the West as the university texts were adapted from the West where secular subjects were taught and even many of their professors and teachers of the universities came from Europe and America. Now Islamic values were given more emphasis than the secular ones while local Muslim scholars and clerics replaced the foreign professors and teachers of the universities.

Ayatullah Khomeini pleaded with intellectuals and university students not to reject the religious scholar or *ulama* but to give them political education if needed. This ideological stand of Imam Khomeini and his government which rejected the Western values or influences of any form resulted in the enmity with the US. Since its establishment the Islamic Republic of Iran has been working for eradicating Western cultural influences in Iran prevailing in any form. Under Khomeini the Islamic regime, different types of media outlets engaged in promoting Islamic and Iranian values and culture instead of the Western ones. This trend is still prevalent. As a result, American culture like any foreign culture has become an enemy culture in Iran. That is why, since 1979 till date, anti-American signs (for example, Down with USA) are seen and freshly repainted graffiti on some hotels and official buildings and the practice still continues. For example, the former US Embassy compound has been turned into a high school for Guards Air Force cadets (and since then the compound remains in the Guards hands) and plastered with anti-US slogans. One such slogan is: "Down to World Arrogance!" Another slogan is: "America is the most dangerous enemy to Islam, the Iranian nation, and human rights." Barbara Slavin has stated that few Iranians pay attention to the slogans, however, the government dutifully repaints them every few years. While derogatory terminology—the Great Satan—has been continuously used by the leadership of the Islamic regime. Conversely, the conservative policymakers in Washington, in particular, among the Republicans are found to respond with similar ignominious comments like "mad mullahs" concerning the leadership of Iran and 'rogue' state or member of 'axis of evil' regarding Iran.

Meanwhile, in a speech in March 1990, the Supreme Leader Khamenei blamed all "arrogant powers" with "the satanic and demonic American power" at their head, for "leading humanity toward decadence ... [and] mocking and ridiculing all spiritual values." In another speech he described the US as "the embodiment of the Devil and corruption."<sup>28</sup> Later on in 1996, the Supreme Leader published an important book entitled *Farhang va tahajum-i farhangi*, which was largely devoted to dissecting US cultural attacks on Iran. In his book Khamenei wrote: "We have to believe that we are subject to the cultural assault of our enemies."<sup>29</sup> Khamenei also articulated that since Iran was subjected to US pressures and censure because Iran's uncompromising

embrace of an Islamist ideology which in turn, provoked Washington's animus, the Islamic Republic of Iran had to persist with its struggle against US machinations, including cultural aggression, how long and costly that struggle might be. Although there were no cultural ties between Iran and the US after the 1979 Islamic Revolution, the late 1990s witnessed short-lived cultural communications between the two countries. Iran's President Sayyed Mohammad Khatami believed that modernity was compatible with culture of Iran and that Western-inspired practices could be easily and successfully woven into Iran's historical, national and religious tapestry. In this regard, his mission was to initiate a civilizational upgrade, and to push the Islamic Republic into the 21st Century. In context, in his January 7, 1998 CNN interview Iran's President Khatami broke the old tradition of viewing Americans in hostile terms and began with a long discourse paying tribute to the "great American people" and proclaimed admiration for American political tradition. Then Khatami called for Iran-US cultural exchanges among scholars, artists, journalists and tourists.<sup>30</sup> Khatami focused on harmony between civilizations through intellectual links between peoples of Iran and America, rather than direct political relations between the two countries.

In this way, he steered Iran's US policy away from firmly-footed contentious issues and tried hard to promote a hopeful and optimistic probe for cultural common ground in areas such as scholarship and sports. President Clinton responded positively. As a consequence, in February 1998, a US wrestling team arrived in Iran to participate in the Takhti Cup tournament in Tehran. President Khatami had invited them as part of a broad push to normalize Iran's relations with the US. As stated previously, the US wrestlers of the team were the first Americans officially represented their country in Iran since the seizure of US Embassy in 1979 and observers compared it to the US "ping-pong diplomacy" with China in the 1970s. Indeed, culturally, emotionally and psychologically for participants as well as the viewers on both Iranian and the US sides, the games had been an extraordinary breakthrough. One eye-witness scholar of the game has noted that the Iranian crowds had cheered the visiting Americans as much as the home team, and at the end of the games the five Americans were paying that support back. The scholar has also noted that in September that same year when another US wrestling team visited Iran to play in the World Wrestling Championship, Iranians in general and 12,000 spectators in particular, once again cheered the American team as their own. What is more, after end of the match which ended with Iranian wrestler Jadidi winning 3-0 over his US rival Melvin Douglas, Jadidi refused to have the referee raise his arm in victory and walked over to Douglas, raising the American's arm along with his own. The scholar has finally put: "It was one of those rare moments in history where all elements had come together to augur a historic shift."<sup>31</sup>

Meantime, following Khatami's "Dialogue among Civilizations" offer, a number of Americans who previously had served in high US government positions, made trips to Iran to participate in different international conferences and meetings.<sup>32</sup> Similar visits were made by Iranians to the US. To some, visits from both countries helped educate and learn a greater number of Iranians and Americans about their respective political settings, with potentially positive results for the long term. Thus the cultural, educational and sports exchanges that occurred helped to soften the huge wall of mistrust a little bit.<sup>33</sup> As mentioned in previous chapter that since Khatami's desire for an Iran-US rapprochement was genuine, culturally Iran seemed prepared in favour of Iran-US reconciliation. Barbara Slavin has noted that after the 9/11 attacks, Iran produced *Coca-Cola* for the first time since the 1979 Islamic Revolution under license in the eastern Iranian shrine city of Mashhad. Slavin has put: "The drink had come to symbolize America, and consuming it in public was a political statement in favor of U.S.-Iran reconciliation."<sup>34</sup> However, flushed with victories in Afghanistan and Iraq, the Bush administration showed utmost disrespect to Iranian call for rapprochement which was demonstrated in Bush's "Axis of evil" speech where Iran was singled out as one of the members of evil states. Consequently, Iranians depicted President Bush as an evil and compared him with Yazid, the evil caliph whose forces murdered Imam Hussein [one of the grand-sons of the Holy Prophet Muhammad (pbuh)] and his followers in the seventh century.

Meanwhile, American movie world the Hollywood has been playing a crucial role in making the overall Iran-US relations in general and Iran-US cultural relations in particular more hostile. Since 1979-1981 Hostage Crisis, the Hollywood became an important diffusion centre of anti-Iranian propaganda. With the release of the hostages, the Hostage Crisis was quickly transformed into a "hostage industry". Many of the ex-hostages became celebrities, movie directors, writers, and speakers. They produced scores of anti-Iranian movies and thus Hollywood found a new nemesis in the Islamic Republic of Iran and in its Islamic leaders. Culturally, some of its stereotypical and anti-Iranian movies left huge negative effects on Iranian cultural arena. For example, a movie entitled *Peacemaker* (1997) was produced in the Hollywood in which a character, apparently without any context, says "f... Iran". In the *The Hitman* (1991), several mobs join together to demolish an Iranian mob operating in Canada. The movie has reinforced the stereotypical images of Iranians as unreliable, dangerous, cruel, and fanatical. Other Hollywood films that reinforced the stereotypical images of the Iranians and angered Iranians from common people to ruling elites profusely were: *Naked Gun* (1988), *Under Siege* (1986), *The Delta Force* (1986), *Into the Night* (1985), *Down and Out in Beverly Hills* (1985), *Threads* (1984), *The Final Options* (1983), *Silver Bears* (1978)<sup>35</sup>, *The Wrestler*,<sup>36</sup> *The Stoning of Soraya*,<sup>37</sup> *Alexander*,<sup>38</sup> *300*,<sup>39</sup> *Not Without My Daughter* (1990)<sup>40</sup> *Madhouse* (1990) etc.<sup>41</sup>

It is important to state that Hollywood films are also shown on state television in the US but are censored for scenes deemed offensive to Islamic mores. Culturally, these developments have appeared very damaging for the future rapprochement of Iran-US relations. Iranian officials claimed the country has suffered deliberate and systematic misrepresentation by Hollywood, which they often accused of being controlled by pro-Zionist interests. Iranian government during President Ahmadinejad severely condemned Hollywood film *300*, a Warner Bros production about the battle between Greeks and Persians at Thermopylae in 480 BC, as “psychological warfare” and complained to the UN that it subjected Iranians to racial stereotyping. Later on, his government singled out *The Wrestler*, starring Mickey Rourke, which, among other things, included a wrestler called “the Ayatollah”.<sup>42</sup> In this way, mistrust grew and took firm position in Iranian culture about US cultural assault against Iranians and their indigenous and Islamic culture. By the same token, Ahmadinejad declined a request by Oliver Stone, the director of film ‘*JFK*’, to film a documentary about him. Advisers of President Ahmadinejad later described Stone as “part of the Great Satan”, despite his leftwing sympathies and a track record of making documentaries about Fidel Castro and Yasser Arafat.

Amidst this cultural hostility, in 2009, a cultural group from the US including American Beauty star Annette Bening, Phil Robinson—director of *Field of Dreams*, President of the Academy of Motion Picture Arts and Sciences Sid Ganis, William Horberg, producer of *The Kite Runner*, and Alfre Woodard, who acted in *Desperate Housewives*, visited Iran. The delegation was invited to Iran by Khane Cinema (Cinema House), the country’s biggest film group, which is under the authority of the Ministry of Culture and Islamic Guidance. Many believe this ‘was meant to be Hollywood’s attempt at stealing a march on President Barack Obama’s offer to reach out a hand to Iran—an ambassadorial trip to a country where it is reviled as decadent and accused of depicting Iran as hostile and backward’. While others view that the visit was an attempt at cultural détente between Iran and the US and thus aimed at bridging a gulf of mutual misunderstanding. However, the Ahmadinejad government viewed the visit of US cultural personalities very negatively. Perhaps, fearful of US-inspired “velvet revolution”, the Iranian government did not accept the US cultural group cordially. Rather, the then arts adviser of Iranian government named Javad Shamghadri demanded that the nine-strong delegation apologise for Hollywood’s past sins. In his demand Javad Shamghadri said: “[Iranian] cinema officials will only have the right to have official sessions with ... Hollywood movie-makers when they apologise to the Iranians for their 30 years of insults and slanders ... The Iranian people and our revolution have been repeatedly unjustly attacked by Hollywood. We will believe Obama’s policy of change when we see change in Hollywood too, and if Hollywood wants to correct its behaviour towards Iranian people and Islamic culture then they have to officially apologise.”<sup>43</sup>

The leadership of the Islamic Republic of Iran strongly believe that improvement of Iran-US cultural relations would only attack thoughts and ideologies and promote US and Western culture of corruption and decadence like the Shah era. The present Islamic leadership generally accused the former Shah of mass importation of Western values and sexual laxity in Iran through Hollywood cinemas, radio and television programmes. In this regard, the US 'was seen as the inspiration, if not the direct instigator'.<sup>44</sup> Therefore, any cultural (as well as political) engagement with the US would only bring the menace of the Great Satan closer to the land of Islam and hence, the danger of such cultural corruption had to be avoided. For these same reasons, a US women's badminton team was denied entry in February 2009, despite having been invited to play in a tournament.<sup>45</sup> Along with the government anti-US position, general Iranians have been standing firm against any US cultural domination. In WorldPublicOpinion.org polling conducted in 2008 and 2009, 75% Iranian held the view that US goal is to impose its culture.<sup>46</sup>

During the current Iranian President Hassan Rouhani, another spate of cultural interactions has been witnessing in line with political diplomacy over Iran's nuclear programme since 2013. As a clear and effective means to promote understanding the most challenging Iran-US relations, the US tried 'sports diplomacy'. In August 2014, a US volleyball team with support from the US State Department hosted the Iranian National Men's Volleyball team for a series of four friendly matches in South California between August 9 and 16. The Iranian team arrived in the US on August 7 and was greeted at the airport in Los Angeles by State Department personnel, local officials and representatives of US volleyball. The *Pars Time* reported that 'this is the first time in recent memory that the Iranian Volleyball Team has visited the United States' although both teams first met in November 2006 at the World Championship in Japan, where the US team won the match with a 3-0 victory. The US team repeated the victory in 2014.<sup>47</sup> In mid-June of 2015, a week-long visit of a high ranking US delegation to Iran which included the heads of a number of US universities and headed by Dr. Alan Goodman (the sixth President of the Institute of International Education) from June 18, 2015, indicated US universities resolve to develop academic ties with Iran.<sup>48</sup> Earlier on April 12, 2015, Iran's national wrestling team was able to beat the US squad 5-3 to win the 2015 Freestyle Wrestling World Cup.<sup>49</sup> These developments remind one that a narrow channel has been working for the improvement of Iran-US cultural relations.

### **Conclusion**

The cultural relations between Iran and the US had begun even before the political or economic relations started. Before the WWII, the American missionaries, economic advisors and other individuals contributed a lot to the development of cultural ties between Iran and the US. Since 1945 when the US government got involved in Iranian Crisis over Azerbaijan, its overall

involvement enhanced. Following the CIA-led 1953 coup d'état, the US had established strong cultural influence side by side with political influence in Iran. As the patron, the US represented and dominated everything in Iran: its politics, economy and culture before the 1979 Islamic Revolution. Immediately after the Islamic Revolution, the new Islamic leaders tried to get rid of the Western (American) culture. The Islamic Revolution was carried out in the name of Islam (demonstrated in the revolutionary slogan of 'no east, no west', but Islamic Republic) and the new state that emerged from it became the Islamic Republic of Iran. Since then Iran has become a very different place in the world, with Islam dominating all aspects of its internal affairs: politics, economy, the press, culture, etc. The US viewed this as Iran's march toward medieval period where backwardness, darkness, ignorance, superstitions and religious bigotry dominated human life. Contrarily, since 1979, Iran has been viewing the US as the source for anti-Islamic set of cultural actions. Islamic leadership and many Iranians (except the youth) generally view that the precondition of preserving the Islamic Revolution is to avoid the engagement with the Great Satan. This different perspective of cultural outlook has made any future rapprochement more difficult. Given this reality, it will not be difficult to conclude that any Iran-US cultural rapprochement is impossible in the near future without mending Iran-US political and economic relations.

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36. This film caused offence when its main character, Mickey Rourke, smashed a pole carrying Iran's national flag across his knee. It also featured a wrestler called the Ayatullah—apparently after Iran's religious rulers—who wore a skimpy leotard in the country's colours.
37. In the film, an Iranian woman is stoned to death under Iran's *Sharia law* after being convicted of adultery.
38. Directed by Oliver Stone, the movie was criticised for its sympathetic portrayal of the ancient Macedonian king, whom Iranians blame for the destruction of Persepolis in 330 BC.
39. The film upset Iran by portraying ancient Persians as bloodthirsty and violent.
40. The film was based on the story of an Iranian physician, married to an American, who decides to take his wife and their small daughter to Iran for a visit. Once there, he decides to stay and refuses to permit his wife and daughter to leave Iran. To some, the film has served to reinforce the media stereotype of Iranians as terrorists who, if not actively bombing public buildings or holding airline passengers hostage, are untrustworthy, irrational, cruel, and barbaric. The Iranian government condemned it as projecting a negative image and banned the book on which it is based.
41. Partially centering upon a wealthy Iranian who is in the process of divorcing his American wife, this film is another damaging example. In one of the scenes, the wife, speaking to Ghadir (her Iranian husband) utters such insults as "you goddamn towel heads, sand rats" and so on.
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## **Chapter 8**

### **Conclusion**

The case histories of “the tortured relationship” between Iran and the US relations are unique, complex and continuous however, replete with many myths, truths and untruths. Former US President Abraham Lincoln (1861-1865) once stated: “History is not history unless it is the truth”.<sup>1</sup> In line with this truism, the present research study has examined Iran-US relations since 1945 from political, economic, cultural, ideological, regional and international perspectives and made a humble attempt to filtrate the truths from the untruths and many lies and myths told about Iran’s relations with the US till date. The research study has also tried to remove existing untruths and rewrite (for example, section III of chapter 2 and sections II and III of chapter 4) and explore new truths (for instance, section IV of chapter 3) about Iran-US relations. It is pertinent to state that every major issue in the history of Iran-US relations since 1945 is a tangle which consists of decades of accumulated politico-economic and psychological scar tissues and none of these issues can be easily dismissed without judging them in light of factual ground. The present study has been conducted to that direction by critically analyzing the changing dynamics of Iran-US relations. In the end, this chapter concludes the whole study of Iran-US relations since 1945 with key findings to show why Iran-US relations are still far away from mending and, how worst fate they may face in case of not fixing their fragile and hostile relations in the days to come and as a result, how the hostile relationship has persistently been haunting both Tehran and Washington and causing bilateral and regional concern and endangering the world peace at large.

Historically, ever since the early nineteenth century, when Persia or Iran was sucked into the whirlwind of European power politics, Anglo-Russian rivalry constituted the international sub-system of particular concern to Iran. Against this backdrop, Iran was seen to establish diplomatic relations with the US in 1883 which actually came after the establishment of Tehran-Washington cultural and economic relations in 1830 and in 1856 respectively. Although since 1883 Iranian government favored the third power strategy and turned to the US to break the see-saw of British-Russian pressures and influences in Iran, the hesitation (not to antagonize European powers), uncertainty and delay marked US policy in Iran prior to the WWII. It was during and after the WWII Iran became the theatre for US involvement and Iran-US relations began to take a new turn. During the war the US became a key player in Iranian politics—a player which was seen to work for two objectives: for the preservation of Iran’s independence and for the promotion of US economic interest in the country. Due no doubt to the geostrategic (as a buffer state between Soviet

Union and the Middle East) and economic (oil) considerations, Iran was thus able to win its place in US foreign policy since 1945. By war's end in 1945, when the Soviet threat to Iran's sovereignty climaxed the Iranian Crisis or Azerbaijan Crisis of 1945-1946, the US came to Iran's rescue which eventually consolidated US position in the country. Iranians were pleased to see that it was the US that got the Russians out of their country in 1946. The role of the US in the Iranian Crisis of 1945-1946 largely convinced Iranians that the US had the ability to control their destinies even when they did not. Thus while the US played a decisive role in safeguarding Iran's independence in the Iranian Crisis of 1945-1946, the event appeared as a great turning point in the subsequent history of Iran-US relations.

This study helps to conclude that after this event a sort of close relationship went on steadily growing between Iran and the US based on "A friend in need, a friend indeed" principle. Since then Iran-US relations experienced the warmest course in long history and this type of relationship continued up to 1951. After the birth of a Jewish state of Israel in 1948, a combination of US concerns including access to oil, the containment of the Soviet Union, and the security of Israel initiated a happy marriage between Iran and the US. Thus, well before the nationalization of Iran's oil industry in 1951, Iran-US relations were outstandingly well established and tested. In 1951, following the nationalization of Iran's oil industry by Iran's nationalist Prime Minister Dr. Mohammad Mosaddeq, the problem began to crystallize between Iran and the US. The US eventually purposefully and violently intervened in Iranian politico-economic affairs in 1953. The US, thus played the most damaging role to the development of normal Iran-US relations that began on the basis of mutual respect and trust of sovereignty and integrity following the end of the Iranian Crisis of 1945-1946. Although after the US intervention in 1953, a close state-to-state bilateral Iran-US relationship began and both Tehran and Washington enjoyed this type of relations till 1979, however, what many analysts tend to avoid pointing out that by the end of the 1970s the chemistry of Iran-US special relationship was outweighed by Iran-US strained relations (see Section IV of chapter 3) that also began in 1953 and developed beneath the surface of Iran-US close relations. The decades-long close relations ended in 1979 and thus politico-economic and cultural honeymoon of the US in Iran ended in a messy divorce in face of a strong anti-American Islamic Revolution due to the US intervention in Iran in 1953.

In this way, the 1953 US intervention in Iran appeared as one of the most deciding factors in the history of overall Iran-US relations. However, the irony of history is that although the 1953 US-sponsored episode left an irremovable scar on Iranian minds, it remained unknown to the Americans due to the US government policy. In 1979 when the Islamic Revolution—"a political earthquake in one of the most sensitive regions of the world"—and the subsequent Hostage Crisis

of 1979-1981 took place as a reaction to the US interference in Iran since 1953, it radically changed the calculus of Iran-US relationship and ushered a new phase of hostile relations which is still prevalent. Historically, Iran has some very important problems with the US and vice versa for which both Iran and the US have been experiencing confrontational and hostile relations. Much of the ferocious hatred each side reserves for the other had actually originated from pain each has experienced at different times from the other side. Additionally, militant Israel has been poisoning the prevailing Iran-US hostile relations for its own benefits. So, what stands between Iran and the US is a storm-swept and deep sea of troubles.

The steps that President Clinton took in response to Khatami's significant overtures in the late 1990s were largely symbolic and had no serious or positive impact on the substance of the bilateral Iran-US relations. Therefore, everything was eventually stymied by hard-line neo-conservatives (also known as confrontationalists) and hostility from the Bush administration. The most frustrating point in the history of the rapprochement attempt of Iran-US relations is that once failed to mend their relationship during Khatami-Clinton era, the issue became part of domestic policies in both countries.<sup>2</sup> In the US, anti-Iranian hard-line President George Bush took office in 2001, while hard-line President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad was elected President in Iran in 2005. Both hardliners and their followers made every reconciliation attempt between Iran and the US quite impossible. For its part, the Bush administration, influenced by Israel, its lobby group in the US—the AIPAC, the neoconservatives or the confrontationalists, adopted “get-tough” policy toward Iran which only worked to intensify Tehran-Washington hostility although for strategic reason it welcomed Iran's assistance in Afghanistan and Iraq in 2001 and 2003 respectively. It was during this time Iran was seen to approach with real intention to help the US and to mend its broken relations with the country. An observer has put: “Never before had postrevolutionary Iran been so willing to help the United States as it had in Afghanistan and Iraq.”<sup>3</sup> However, in response to crucial assistance it provided to the US in Afghanistan, what Iran achieved was a humiliating epithet: “axis of evil” from anti-Iran US President George Bush. Essentially, Bush's “axis of evil” speech significantly changed the way Iran and the US viewed each other. Particularly, Iran saw the “axis of evil” declaration as an insult to it and stiffened its position toward the US.

In this context, trouble flared up again between Iran and the US with President Bush's plan for a military strike against Iran in 2006 placing the Iran-US relations on a more confrontational track. Although eventually the Bush administration abandoned the military plan but the US plan for a military action against Iran in 2006 has left a long-term legacy on the Iranian mind. As a result, even after a change in policy under the Obama administration since 2009, Iranians keep viewing that the US threat is lurking behind the scene and whenever environment favours Washington will

definitely move militarily against Tehran. Against this backdrop, the Obama administration has succeeded in concluding the 2015 nuclear deal with Iran. Then in mid-January of 2016 it lifted all sanctions from Iran (imposed since 1979) however, it did waste no time to impose new sanction on Iran as stated in section III of chapter 5. The new Trump administration has also been imposing sanctions since early 2017 on Iran over its missile programme. Nonetheless, the changed behavior of both hostile parties since the 2015 nuclear deal has created a new hope of Iran-US rapprochement. However, as the nuclear deal has come in the midst of strong opposition from US allies namely Israel and Saudi Arabia, while the new US President Donald Trump has categorically stated that the 2015 nuclear deal with Iran was the worst deal, what future would hold for Iran-US relations is now a question to be answered?

### **The Future of Iran-US Relations: Accommodation or Confrontation?**

Given the strong opposition of current US President Donald Trump and Washington's Middle East allies (Israel and Saudi Arabia) to the 2015 nuclear deal, it is indeed a difficult task to predict what is going to be happened in future of Iran-US relations. Back in 1999, James A. Bill has noted in an article that despite Iranian official hostility toward US policy, and although hundreds of Iranians have been killed by US military action in the Gulf while less than a handful of Americans had died at the hands of Iran, the masses of Iranian people still hold warm feelings toward individual American citizens. About a decade later Barbara Slavin has pen-pictured the same thing in her book entitled *Bitter Friends, Bosom Enemies: Iran, the U.S. and the twisted path to confrontation*. The Iranian have such warm feelings towards the Americans despite the fact that their government did wrong to them in 1953, supported the repressive rule of the Shah during the 1953-1979 period, assisted Iraq's Saddam Hussein during the 1980-1988 Iran-Iraq War and tolerated Saddam's use of CW on them during the war. At present, Iranians are well aware of past and present US anti-Iran policies while their government still accuses that due to US policies Iran's economy, regional and global position and international reputation are all in shambles. Yet they favour rapprochement between Iran and the US. However, the thinking and feelings of the Americans and their government are diametrically opposite. The key reason is that the American view of Iran and Iranians is mainly based on anti-Iranian propaganda by Israel, and by the media since the 1979 hostage-taking due to government's policy. This has helped the US government to adopt more anti-Iranian policies till date.

Currently the US government keeps blaming Iran for its alleged linkage with new terrorist plots around the world. Iran is also accused of undermining neighboring governments and inciting unrest following the 2010 Arab Spring<sup>4</sup> from Bahrain to Yemen who are US close allies. Since 2011 Washington has been strongly condemning Iran's act of pouring money and weapons into

Syria to prop up its ally Bashar al-Assad, sending in Revolutionary Guard trainers and Hezbollah fighters to further bolster his regime. The US along with its Arab (Saudi Arabia) and Israeli allies has been working strenuously for the destruction of the Assad regime in Syria, but because of Russo-Iranian support for the regime the US and its allies have dismally failed to achieve their goal till today. In fact, the opposing stances of Iran and the US in Syria, Yemen, the Persian Gulf, Central Asia and the Middle East region have only intensified their present-day hostility. Therefore, the future course of Iran-US relations, which holds out a series of challenges and opportunities, remains the subject of considerable controversy among analysts although tensions reduced considerably because of the recently concluded nuclear deal in July 2015. One important aspect of this controversy is that after more than three decades following the 1979 Iranian Islamic Revolution, Iran and the US have not established diplomatic relations, and have continued to refuse to address each other publicly. By now, because of hostile relations since 1979, many lessons have been learnt on both sides. Iran has learnt that without repairing its relations with US, its economic isolation to a certain extent from international community has become permanent, therefore, its economy remains in dire situation (although by this time Iran has learnt to live with sanctions and has proved the futility of economic sanctions imposed on it by US and UN). While the US has learnt that without Iranian help the settlement of Middle Eastern issues is impossible. Although in theory, Iran is an isolated nation, but in practice, it has successfully avoided complete isolation from world community since 1990s and it is not an international pariah state because of its rich oil and natural resources. Plus Iran has developed close relations with US Cold War rival Russia, and current economic rival China, and other Third World countries like India and Latin American states of Venezuela and Brazil. Moreover, Iran has been the focus of international attention for its influences on Hezbollah and HAMAS and for its nuclear programme. Iran's gradual and steady success in the field of nuclear programme has clearly served the notice that Washington's anti-Iranian policy is not working well.

Given these realities, analysts are of the view that there are real potential benefits of increased co-operation between the two sides. A noted scholar once optimistically stated: "Normalization [of relations between Iran and the US] takes time, but sooner or later it will come."<sup>5</sup> While another expert by the name of James A. Bill has concluded in 1988 that if any attempt failed to produce anything to resolve Iran-US hostility and enmity, another attempt should be made and until that succeeded both parties would suffer as they confronted one another in a tense and tumultuous world.<sup>6</sup> A decade later in 1999 Bill has also predicted that the Iran-US détente is inevitable and when this détente comes, it will require the global hegemon (the US) to communicate diplomatically with the regional hegemon (Iran) as a sovereign, independent member of the

community of nations and not as a client state. He has gone to state that both Iran and the US will need to anchor their foreign policies upon more than military might. They must also improve their understanding of one another while at the same time developing credible moral muscle.<sup>7</sup> In this context and after a spectacular improvement of Iran-US relations under Iran's reformist President Mohammad Khatami, in 2000, President Bill Clinton hopefully stated that: "one of the best things that [the United States] can do for the long-term peace and health of the Middle East and, indeed, much of the rest of the world, is to have a constructive partnership with Iran."<sup>8</sup> Oddly, two years later the Bush administration turned the optimistic course of Iran-US rapprochement into hostile one. Again under the Obama administration hope of Iran-US reconciliation has gained ground, especially after 2015 nuclear deal. After the deal a good number of analysts, political scientists, international theorists and diplomats are hopeful and optimistic about Iran-US rapprochement in the future, although there remains a substantial distrust between Iran and the US. Hence, for the US, regaining Iranian goodwill would be a long process given the US involvement in Iran in 1953 and thereafter. On the other hand, it will be absolutely difficult and to some extent an unachievable task for the Iranians to make a fair position for them in the eyes and hearts of the Americans given the traumatic history of Hostage Crisis of 1979-1981.

Therefore, given the matrix and realities of Iran-US relations, it may also be argued that in view of past history of Iran-US relations which have been characterized by suspicion, antagonism, and open demonization and hostility, the chances of reconciliation between Tehran and Washington are very slim. Back in 1980 in his *Paved with Good Intentions: the American Experience and Iran*, Barry Rubin has predicted that the conflict between Tehran and Washington would last for a very long time<sup>9</sup> which is also my point to make for the final conclusion. We optimistically but falsely, may hope for a much better relationship between Iran and the US in the days to come, however, this false hope may not sit with harsh realities of Iran-US relations. One of the many such realities is that even after showing an unprecedented positive gesture by lifting sanctions from Iran in mid-January 2016 following the 2015 nuclear deal, the US is still showing anti-Iran attitude to this minute by imposing new sanctions on Iran since the time of lifting old sanctions. For example, the outgoing Obama administration imposed sanctions on Iran in mid-January of 2016 over Iran's ballistic missile programme and the current Trump administration has been doing the same thing since early February 2017. In the latest development of Iran-US relations on July 18, 2017, the Trump administration announced new sanctions against Iran over its ballistic missile programme and what it called Tehran's support for terrorist groups in the Middle East.<sup>10</sup> This unequivocally shows that the challenges to normal relations between Iran and the US are many and it also appears that all challenges will not be overcome peacefully. While the internal and external

determinants who generally dictate the behavior of Iran and the US and their policies continue to resist efforts at final settlement of the disputes of the two countries. What is more, the complexities of the relationship and the depths of the enmity and mistrust between Iran and the US are such intense that any rapprochement between the two countries has factually become quite impossible and unachievable. Therefore, enmity and hostility between Iran and the US will continue for an indefinite period although at present the 2015 nuclear deal has successfully restrained the pace of mutual hostility to some extent. The key question here is: why?

History shows that since the inception of their political and diplomatic relations in 1883, Iran and the US have engaged in an ambivalent relationship. Although since 1945 the Iranian and the American people have usually regarded each other as friends, since 1953, and more specifically after 1979 their governments have generally treated each other as enemies. This trend is still on. Throughout the twentieth century and into the twenty-first, Iran and the US butted heads over issues as diverse as oil, communism, Israel, the 1953 coup d'état, the 1979-81 Hostage Crisis, political or radical Islam, Arab-Israeli peace settlement, influence in the Persian Gulf, Middle East, Central Asia and the Caucasus region, and nuclear proliferation, often framing their mutual antagonism as a clash between regional hegemon and global hegemon. History also shows that since 1953, Iran-US relations have been plagued with a plethora of mistrust and hostility or more correctly "enmity". According to Webster's dictionary, the term *enmity* "suggests hatred which may be open or concealed; [and] rancor suggesting bitter brooding over a wrong." In the light of this definition, Iran and the US have been experiencing deep and bitter "enmity" for many years. Consciously or otherwise, both Iran and the US have done some unforgivable wrongs to each other which contributed a lot to the continuation of their enmity. They have become such enemies that they viscerally dislike each other, they consider potential threat to each other, they demean each other, they attribute evil motives to each other and they find no redeeming value in the statements or actions of one another. Let us now critically analyse why and how the incredible period of history of Iran-US hostile relations came to be, with a brief review of the never-mending wrongs that both parties inflicted to each other for which (and for other reasons) the enmity continues unabated and will continue in similar fashion in the days to come, despite the fact that 2015 nuclear deal has opened a new window of reconciliation between the two 'frenemies'.<sup>11</sup>

**Firstly**, the most significant factor that has plagued Iran-US relations is the CIA-engineered 1953 coup d'état. The conventional wisdom is that the problem of Iran-US relations began following the 1979 Islamic Revolution and subsequent US Embassy takeover in Tehran by Iranians. Most pro-American analysts support this view. However, upon interpretation and reinterpretation of existing sources it would be safe to conclude that tensions and hostility between Iran and the US have deep



historic roots that dated back to 1953 when in the context of the ongoing Cold War, the US took the Iranian matter in its hands and ousted Mosaddeq's rightful democratic government. In fact, here lies the crux of the whole problem of Iran-US relations. Let us see how. Gary Sick has observed that after 1953 the US would never again be able to enjoy the presumption of benign objectives and enlightened self-interest when engaging itself in the affairs of Iran. He goes on to say whatever interpretation one chooses to place on the objectives and consequences of CIA-engineered Operation AJAX of 1953, it abruptly and permanently ended US political innocence with respect to Iran.<sup>12</sup>

Historically, the CIA-led 1953 coup d'état against Mosaddeq was an unforgettable and unforgivable trauma for Iran. Almost everyone in Iran has for decades known that the US was responsible for putting an end to democratic rule in 1953 and installing what became the long dictatorship of Mohammad Reza Shah which first gave birth to strong anti-Americanism and then brought to power a passionately anti-American Islamic regime through the 1979 the Islamic Revolution.<sup>13</sup> Strangely, before the 2000 revelation by *New York Times* and verbal confession by the then US Secretary of State Madeleine Albright, the story of US unlawful intervention was a well-kept secret due to US government policy. A host of scholars and the US government itself from that vantage point generally accuse the present Islamic Republic of Iran of poisoning Tehran-Washington relations through the Hostage Crisis of 1979-1981. In reality, this accusation is partially correct, but does not correspond with the whole fact. Nobel laureate and Pulitzer-winning American writer Pearl S. Buck once said, "If you understand today, you have to search yesterday." This truism is nowhere more appropriately applicable than in the case of Iran-US relations. In the light of this statement, the 1953 CIA-engineered coup d'état is just like the *yesterday* to the Iranians who painfully cherish the event and subsequent US intervention in their politics, economy and culture. The resonance of this truth is also found in the remarks of R. K. Ramazani. A Professor Emeritus of Government and Foreign Affairs, University of Virginia, and widely considered as the dean of Iranian foreign policy studies, Ramazani has stated: "For Iran, the past is always present."<sup>14</sup> Gary Sick opines in the same way and says, in Washington, by 1978 the events of 1953 had all the relevance of a pressed flower, but in Iran, the memory of 1953 was as fresh as if it had happened only the week before, and the popular image of the Shah as a pliant creature of the US was a vivid political reality.<sup>15</sup>

This Iranian stance was also reflected in the remarks of Iran's current Supreme Leader Ayatullah Ali Khamenei. On the fourteenth anniversary of Mosaddeq's death in 1981 Ali Khamenei stated "We are not liberals, like Allende (and Mosaddeq) who the CIA can snuff out". Scholars agree that such attitudes continue to cast a long shadow on contemporary Iran. Therefore, it will be

completely impossible to understand the intricacy of the history of the relations between Iran and the US from their cordiality and friendship to hostility and enmity unless and until one takes a close and careful look at this past relationship of the two countries. Factually, the psychological scars of the CIA-sponsored coup d'état that toppled Iran's democratic nationalist government of Mosaddeq on August 19, 1953 were so deep and they are still vivid and for that they are very damaging for the normalization of Iran-US relations. Iranians continue to remember the event with great pain and hold the US responsible for all miseries they experienced during the Shah's regime. David Patrick Houghton has expressly stated that Iranians had not forgotten their own history and the role played by external powers in it; they had taught it to their sons and daughters.<sup>16</sup>

These all help us to conclude one important point that at the bottom of the present day's hostile relationship between Tehran and Washington was US-sponsored 1953 coup d'état in Iran and it will be impossible for the US to remove the 'ugly American' image from the minds of the Iranian. On April 24, 2009, US President Barack Obama in his statement on Armenian Remembrance Day said: "History, unresolved, can be a heavy weight." The legacy of the CIA-sponsored 1953 coup d'état, especially in the context of Iran-US relations is an unresolved history which has been haunting the Iran-US relations as nightmare ever since. Till date, there is no US initiative to resolve this "unresolved" history of Iran-US relations for its illegal intervention in 1953 by offering genuine apology to the Iranians (except the verbal confession in 2000 that the Eisenhower administration unlawfully interfered in Iran in 1953 or in 2013 that the CIA was behind the 1953 coup d'état in Iran). In this regard, my study clearly suggests that unless and until the Iranian grievances and pains due to the 1953 US intervention are properly redressed, there is no hope for the normalization of Iran-US relations which means the continuation of Iran-US hostile and confrontational relations in the days to come.

**Secondly**, the holding of some 52 Americans as hostages by Iranians for 444 traumatic days has been playing an important role in the present-day inimical relations between Iran and the US. To the Americans, this was a fundamental sin committed by the Islamic Republic of Iran in 1979 and for which their government still maintains an enduring enmity towards Iran. Although there is a good deal of evidence to suggest that Iranians were deeply affronted by Mosaddeq's overthrow in 1953 and that they carried this grudge directly into both the Islamic Revolution and the hostage-taking of November 1979,<sup>17</sup> the US viewed the storming the Embassy and the holding of Americans hostage as barbaric act and violation of international laws. Interestingly, about fifty year later in March 2000 the then Secretary of State Madeline Albright formally recognized US involvement in the 1953 coup and the negative repercussion of this involvement. But before this recognition, the purposefully exploited and focused history of Iran-US relations centering the

1979-1981 hostage crisis have decidedly shaped the American view of Iran. Therefore, the purposefully suppressed history of the US intervention in Iran in 1953 and thereafter has created an opportunity for anti-Iranian scholars like Kenneth M. Pollack to claim: “Many Americans know almost nothing about the sources of Iranian grievance against the United States, where our own grudge against Tehran came from, and why the two sides have found it so difficult to overcome their differences.”<sup>18</sup>

The matter of the fact is that the US government since the early 1980s has been capitalizing the American anger towards Iran due to the 1979-1981 Hostage Crisis. Thus the Hostage Crisis of 1979-1981 turned the Iran-US relations into another fact of historical tragedy which the Americans still cherish as fresh memory like the Iranians who never forgive the Americans for their role in the 1953 coup which overthrew the nationalist regime of Mosaddeq. Factually, since the hostage-taking, the US has no sympathetic attention to the Islamic Republic of Iran. Additionally, former hostages became powerful decision makers in the Departments of State and Defence and who have been playing important anti-Iranian role, thus making the Iran-US relations more hostile and confrontational. While some of them became Hollywood celebrities who were seen busy producing anti-Iranian films as noted in chapter 7. The hostage-taking episode also galvanized the American public into actions against the Islamic Republic of Iran. In Washington, Iran has assumed the status of America’s most unfavoured as well as enemy nation and it has periodically risen to near the top of the US enemies list ever since. In an article published in 1999 James A. Bill has pointed out: “The American public has not been so forgiving. The humiliating 444-day hostage crisis remains imprinted on the American psyche despite the passage of nearly two decades.”<sup>19</sup> Another scholar in 2005 has argued that the Hostage Crisis set the stage for hostile relations between Iran and the US for years to come.<sup>20</sup> Americans who were politically aware at the time will never forget the seizure of the US Embassy on November 4, 1979,<sup>21</sup> and for anti-Iranian propaganda of major US media this issue will continue to influence the American minds in relation to Iran in the days to come.

A clear example of this statement is that back in 2005, when Mahmoud Ahmadinejad was elected Iran’s President, one of the hostages was seen to remark on *The Washington Times* (published on June 30, 2005) that: “As soon as I saw his picture in the paper, I knew that was the bastard,”<sup>22</sup> indicating that Ahmadinejad was one of the hostage takers. Although the US government later certified that Ahmadinejad was not a hostage taker, but the remark of the former hostage clearly shows that the 1979-1981 hostage issue is an unmitigated scar. According to an observer, “If one mentions the number of 444 to many Americans, they will immediately think of the hostages from the US Embassy held by Iran for 444 days.”<sup>23</sup> The US humiliation at the Iranian hands in the 1979-

1981 period has thus become the seed of US vitriolic hostility towards the Islamic Republic of Iran and this hostility will definitely continue unabated in future. Therefore, if anyone (for example, Kenneth M. Pollack) says or pretends to say that: “We are mostly a forward-thinking and future-oriented people, and we tend to ignore the past for the sake of concentrating on the future”<sup>24</sup>— this is a blatant lying. In fact, the hostage issue comes to the mind of US politicians and general Americans alike when Iran is mentioned. Hence, the pattern of Washington’s Iran policy that had emerged following the Hostage Crisis has been affecting nearly every aspect of US foreign and domestic policy. The US is strongly motivated by a desire to extract “revenge” on the Islamic Republic of Iran for the humiliation it suffered at the hands of the Islamic leadership during the Hostage Crisis. Given this fact, none can imagine let alone expect a future prospect for a rapprochement between Iran and the US. Since both Iranians and the Americans cherish their respective events of 1953 and 1979-1981 with great pains and with strong negative attitude towards each other, and till date they are certainly not in a position to bury their respective pains, the hostile relations between the two countries will certainly continue in the days ahead.

**Thirdly**, the US role in the Iran-Iraq War of 1980-1988 is another important factor for the continuance of Iran-US hostile relations. Since the failure of US hostage rescue mission—Operation Eagle Claw— in March 1980, “America cannot do anything” became Imam Khomeini’s celebrated phrase which was entirely humiliating for US and for its image as a Superpower. In due response to this derogatory terminology plus because of agonizing and unbearable pain due to the ongoing Hostage Crisis, the US directed its ferocious revengeful anger towards the Islamic Republic of Iran and imposed the eight-year war on Iran by encouraging Iraq (examined in Section III of Chapter 4). Most Iranians still believe that the US decided to encourage and support Iraq’s Saddam Hussein to take on Iran instead of attacking directly, while their leaders firmly believed that Iraq’s attack had been instigated by the US as a way of weakening Islamic revolutionary Iran. According to Kenneth M. Pollack, the Iran that the US must deal with today is, in many ways, the Iran created by its experiences in the 1980s, the decade which was the defining decade of Iran’s modern history.<sup>25</sup> Whatever perspective lies in Pollack’s statement, the fact is that this decade was also defining decade of the history of future Iran-US relations because throughout the 1980s or otherwise during eight year war Iran became the target of US aggressive policy.

During this period Iran painfully noticed how emboldened by US support in the UNSC Iraq used CW on its unprotected soldiers and civilians. It was in this context, leaders of the Islamic Republic of Iran consolidated their anti-American attitude. By war’s end in August 1988, bitter, mutual and self-righteous enmity has become the distinguishing features of the Iran-US relationship.

Consequently, despite periodic and short-lived attempts by one side or the other to feel its way toward a so-called rapprochement, bitterness and enmity have been the rule in Iran-US relations, rather than the exception, with no end to it in sight. The present Supreme Leader Ayatullah Ali Khamenei, the ultimate arbiter of Iran's politics had spent considerable time at the Iran-Iraq War front as President of Iran. He toured the battle scenes and saw firsthand the material damage and human loss (with a significant number of handicapped Iranians who are still survived) that the US-imposed military conflict had wrought on the country. Given the fact that the US and its Western allies provided sophisticated arms and CW to Iraq and they tolerated Iraqi use of CW on Iranians, Khomeini's anti-US position became deep-seated and when it comes to the issue of Iran's dealing with the US, his eyewitness accounts, not the suspicion, naturally come to shape his country's policy towards the US. This reality will for sure prevent Iranians to sit with the Great Satan in any future rapprochement.

**Fourthly**, the viewing of each other negatively and the calling of each other in extremely derogatory terms has become a big factor in present-day Iran-US hostile relations which is preventing rapprochement between two hostile nations. In fact, the discord between Iran and the US is nowhere more evident than in the issue of differing views of each other. The US is seen from Tehran as both perceived and real threats to the Islamic regime. Given the memories of the 1953 coup d'état and subsequent US support for the repressive Shah for political and economic exploitation in the country, the Islamic Republic of Iran has got used to see almost every US initiative as a direct or indirect attack on its national interests. Evidence shows that thirty-five plus years of constant US pressure with covert and overt hostility have wrought little change; rather, produced more hardliners and provoked the existing hardliners who have adamantly opposed resuming Iran's relations with the US terming and firmly believing the US as the Great Satan, who along with its Israeli and Arab allies, has been working constantly for dooming the Islamic regime in Tehran. The Iranian leaders also fear that any rapprochement with the US will dissolve the values of their political order to such degree that the entire framework will soon come crashing down. Given the US policy of non-acceptance of the Islamic Republic of Iran, they have consolidated their view that any reconciliation with the US will only weaken their position with the risk of replacing by a US-favored regime.

During his life time, Imam Ayatullah Khomeini viewed that the US and the Soviet Union were the "leading oppressor states of the world, and although they could be dealt with differently tactically, both must be negative targets of Iranian foreign policy." Of the two countries, however, Khomeini identified the US as arrogant world power and hegemon that caused untold harm and blows to the Iranians before and after the Islamic Revolution for which the US has become a permanent enemy

of Iran. Against this background, on November 5, 1979, Khomeini disparagingly described the US as the “Great Satan” while its strong ally in the Middle East—Israel—as “Little Satan” meaning the US and Israel are permanent enemies of Iran, and Islam.<sup>26</sup> There is no doubt that the derogatory ideological term—the Great Satan—has questioned the US image at world stage and every Americans feels shame for that. Fundamentally, here lies the rationale for US clash with Iran’s Islamic leadership since 1979. According to noted historian William O. Beeman, the conflict between Iran and the US as it continues today is a true post-modern culture conflict because both Iran and the US have constructed the “other” to fit an idealized picture of an enemy and mutual demonization.<sup>27</sup> For more than three decades the Islamic Republic of Iran has stigmatized the US as “the Great Satan.” Loathsome and odious, “the Great Satan” evokes contempt and outrage; use of this name is meant to rally Muslims of the world around a common enemy—the US. Moreover, the epithet has had extraordinary longevity, and is still being used, albeit less frequently today. The Great Satan—as a symbolic construction of the US—is likely to endure for all time and the US will perhaps never be able to shake off this shocking demonic epithet for the simple reason that it has hit cultural nerves of the Americans in a profound way. In addition, since Khomeini’s time popular chants in Iran advocating “Death to America” have come second only to the religious slogan “God is great”. The Americans saw then and see now this Iranian attempt to demonize their country and tarnish its image in the eyes of the world in different derogatory terminologies very negatively. They were in the past, are in present and will be in future seriously offended by the use of these terms.

The US has never been short of showing contemptuous attitude towards the Islamic revolutionary leadership in Iran. Americans are prone to evaluate developments in Tehran from the perspective of US concerns. After the Islamic Revolution around 90% of what Americans came to know about Iran they knew through different media outlets namely radio, television, and newspapers whose main goals, of course because of government policy, were to depict Iran as a terrorist nation. While since 1979, the State Department has not only been designating Iran as the world’s “most active state sponsor of terrorism” on a regular basis but has also been documenting its links to bombings, kidnappings, hijackings, and other acts of terrorism. Israel has intentionally and continually been adding new dimension to this American understanding of the Islamic Republic of Iran and its leadership. Now, in the eyes of many ordinary Americans and certainly for a very considerable number of highly influential US policy-makers, Iranian Islamic regime is simply a terrorist-supporting, human-rights oppressing, nuclear-arming and even evil-embodiment political order with which Washington should not and cannot deal unless and until a massive change of policy, rhetoric and attitude comes about in Tehran. Anti-Iranian experts, analysts, commentators

have only been fanning this thinking. For example, like many, Clinton's advisor in the NSC on policy towards Iraq, a proponent of US aggressive policy in Iraq and the author of *The Persian Puzzle: The Conflict between Iran and American* (2004) Kenneth M. Pollack has tried to portray Iran as a tar-baby and any involvement with it would only bring the US to grief.<sup>28</sup> Hence, despite the fact that Iran's geo-strategic significance and an Iran-US warm relationship might benefit US in some extent, but the country "needs" not Iran, Pollack argues.<sup>29</sup> The author has also argued that with the demise of the Taliban regime in Afghanistan, Iran is probably the world's most state sponsor of terrorism which can cause great harm to US interests in the region and finally recommended in his book that the US take actions against Iran. Such thinking still prevails among the common Americans and the conservative policy makers in Washington who are psychologically anti-Iran.

Moreover, since the establishment of the Islamic Republic of Iran in 1979, it has often been describing as a "theocratic" or a "fundamentalist" society, and its rulers have been describing as dictators and "mad mullahs".<sup>30</sup> In 1984 US State Department has designated Iran as sponsor of state terrorism. The US also took satisfaction by calling Iran "backlash" and "rogue state" in the 1990s. To solidify this propaganda and to demonize Iran before the world community Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice referred to Iran as a "totalitarian state" while President George W. Bush infamously labeled it as a member of the "axis of evil" in 2002 which marked a further hardening of the lines between Iran and the US. Iran's portrayals of US as "the Great Satan" and US depictions of Iranian Islamic leaders as the "mad mullahs" and the Islamic Republic of Iran as a terrorist state and a member of "axis of evil" are indeed insulting and derogatory for each other and for the depictions of such derogatory terms by each other one-time Iran-US friendship has become ageless Iran-US enmity. Thus viewing of each other with disrespectful terminologies and as a potential threat to their respective interests has been playing significant role in the current hostile Iran-US relations which is also preventing a possible rapprochement between the two nations.

**Fifthly**, the widening and irresolvable ideological, cultural and religious (Islamic versus Christianity) differences between the Islamic Republic of Iran and the US have also been playing a quite remarkable part in estranging present-day inimical and hostile relations between Tehran and Washington. Differences and hostility that emerge from conflict of interest is more likely to be resolved rationally than what emerges from ideological and cultural differences. Many observers believe Iran's present antagonism toward the US and the Iranian campaign to eradicate Western values from the Islamic world guarantee continued hostility and suspicion between Iran and the US. Antipathetic to the idea of religious rule, American government and people generally see the

Islamic Revolution in Iran as a rejection of modern Western values. The US (and its Israeli and western allies) has identified Iran after 1979 as Islamic theocracy, disorder, and religious tyranny. The US also views that the Islamic Republic of Iran has been threatening the link between secularization, modernization, and democratization, and in doing so it has also threatened the national identity of the US itself.<sup>31</sup> Hence, restoration of a pro-American secular government in Iran has become one of US policy goals since 1979. Conversely, Iranian society under Islamic regime since 1979 has been working for building its model society with Islamic norms, principles and values which are devoted to the glorification of Islam. In Iran, the US is seen as a formidable threat not only because of its strong armed forces (which is equipped with modern and sophisticated weaponry) and its regional ambitions, but also because of the lure of its ideals and seductive culture.<sup>32</sup> Iranians strongly view that the US is the one nation with the capacity to subvert Iran's cultural character as it had done during the Shah's period for which even the secular intellectuals had long complained about the process of Westernization or Westoxication as elaborated in chapter 3. Therefore, Iranian paranoia is that any engagement with the US might bring the menace of US closer to the land of Islam is a danger that has to be avoided. This Iranian ideological paranoia will prevent the normalization of Iran-US relations in future.

**Sixthly**, in line with ideological differences and cultural confrontation, material conflicts or the clash of interests between Tehran and Washington is another aspect of the current Iran-US hostile relations. There is no doubt that because of ideological and cultural differences and material conflicts, every area of common interest and potential co-operation became a battleground between Iran and the US from the very day of the declaration of Iran as the Islamic Republic of Iran in 1979. Although, in actuality, the clash of interests between the two countries began even before the 1979 Islamic Revolution when President Carter decided to make US direct presence in the Middle East in general, and the Persian Gulf in particular. As the Shah had opposed Carter's move, he was secretly abandoned (analyzed in Section IV of Chapter 3). After 1979, the Islamic Republic of Iran has been trying to establish itself in the Persian Gulf region and in the Middle East by using Islam and its influence through proxies as a regional hegemon, a development which the US vehemently opposed for the similar reason. Thus Iran and the US have been in a state of undeclared war for most of the last 35+ years mainly because of their material conflicts. Meanwhile, the Soviet collapse and the end of the Cold War and US victory in the 1991 Gulf War catapulted the US hegemonic desire in the region to the zenith which Iran strongly opposed. Whereas the US wants to become a global hegemon, the Islamic Republic of Iran desires to become regional hegemon. The reality, however, is that *Pax Americana* and *Pax Iranica* cannot



co-exist in the region, therefore, Iran and the US viewed each other as rivals for defining the balance of the Middle East and for their respective interests.

The US wants to see itself as the sole domineering Superpower actor in the region with its ally—Israel—unaffected by any adversary. Conversely, Iran is not in a position to accept this without the US recognizes Tehran's due role and rightful status in the region. While the Islamic Republic of Iran wants its dignity and due role in the region is recognized, the US is seen busy in keeping Iran away from such recognition and cornering the country for the sake of its own interests in the region. It is because of such conflicting interests between Iran and the US, Iran has been resisting the emerging US-led new uni-polar international system since 1991 by allying itself with former US Cold War rival Russia and Asian economic giant and US economic rival China. Given the nature of Iranian resistance to US hegemon in the region, during the Bush administration some in Washington came to see Islamic extremism in general and Iran in particular, as an “existential threat” to the US, similar to the role that Communism played during the Cold War era.<sup>33</sup> Although for minimal concurring interests the ‘frenemies’ worked together in Afghanistan in 2001 and in Iraq in 2003, but historically, most of the interests were and are conflicting. True, they have rarely fought face-to-face, however, they have exchanged bitter insults and threats and attacked each other indirectly, although the worst has not happened yet. A dissatisfied Iran because of not recognizing its due role and status in the region by the US has in fact become a permanent obstacle for the US to achieve Superpower image in the region (in the Middle East, Central Asia and the Caucasus). Therefore, unless and until Iranian demands are met by the US or unless and until Iran compromises with US demands, the hostile relations between them are expected to continue which means a future rapprochement between Iran and the US is quite impossible.

**Seventhly**, US policy of regime change in Iran since 1979 has become one of the most critical objects of discontent in Iran's relations with the US. Iranians witnessed how the US did unmake their lot through regime change in 1953. They also know that exactly how the 1979 Islamic Revolution in Iran and its multifarious consequences have permanently changed the face of the Middle East as well as the course of the Iran-US relations. From the US point of view, the revolutionary Iran has been posing grave threat to US interests in the region. Therefore, since 1979 the US government has a strong belief that only regime change in Iran will reduce the threats posed by the country. The US has taken this as a fact that until a change is taken place in Iranian regime, not Iran itself, not the Persian Gulf, nor the Middle East, nor much of the Third World will be the same again. Although the US successfully sponsored and managed in concluding Camp David Accords between Israel and Egypt (and Palestinians) and created a pro-US Arab-Israeli axis in the region, but it did not in any way compensate the US for the loss of Iran.<sup>34</sup> For that reason,

the US has been persistently working for a regime change in Iran since the establishment of the Islamic government in 1979. One scholar has noted that although US officials assert that they have accepted the Islamic Revolution in Iran, some of their pronouncements and actions indicate that their real hope is to destabilize the clerical regime.<sup>35</sup> Hillary Clinton in her book entitled *Hard Choices* (2014) has recognized the issue and said that over the next few years the US government invested tens of millions of dollars and trained more than five thousand Iranian dissident activists around the world for a regime change in Tehran.<sup>36</sup> The US regime change policy is still in operation. For example, in a hearing before the House Foreign Relations Committee on June 14, 2017, US Secretary of State Rex Tillerson told that Washington's policy toward Tehran was based on regime change.<sup>37</sup> This US position is going to ensure the continuation of old enmity between the two countries. In fact, US regime change policy has made the US a life-long enemy in the eyes of the leaders of Iran and has made normalization of Tehran-Washington relationship quite difficult and unachievable.

**Eighthly**, diabolic role played by militant Israel opposing the Iran-US rapprochement is another key reason in the current hostile relations between Tehran and Washington. Admittedly, since 1979, most Israeli politicians have singled out Iran as the greatest threat to Israel and regional peace.<sup>38</sup> Since 1991 in the context of the end of the Cold War and US victory in the 1991 Gulf War, when Iran started a campaign to project Islam as the symbol of unity through intense propaganda targeting most specifically the Middle East, Africa and Asia, in order to promote global leadership while its media repeatedly emphasized the importance of the unity of the Islamic world,<sup>39</sup> Israel succeeded in transforming Iran into Tel Aviv's enemy number one state. Factually, since then Israel has been constantly trying to convince the US that Iran is a demon. In this way, it is militant Israel which altered the status of Iran from enemy to potential threat to US and its allies. One of the most important reasons why Israel has been playing this demonic role is that Iran considers the Jewish state illegal. On the other hand, the US wants relations with Iran through Israel or at least after reducing Iran's opposition to Israel. The problem here is that Israel does not want any rapprochement between Iran and the US even through its own involvement, since any Iran-US reconciliation will only help Iran become more powerful in the region while Tehran will get the right to continue its nuclear programme which means Israel will be the ultimate target of Iran's nuclear weapons for its aggressive policies towards Iran and its proxies (Hizbullah of Lebanon and HAMAS of Palestine) in the region. This calculation has led Israel to oppose any future Iran-US rapprochement.

By the same token, since 1979 Israel has been influencing Washington's policy-makers to take every action or adopt any policy against Iran as it has deemed fit. Influenced by Israel and its

lobby—the AIPAC—also known as the “magic box of decision-making” in Washington, the US government hardly did anything to normalize its relationship with the Islamic Republic of Iran in the past. Evidences are also available that what in the past Israel influenced, now it has been controlling in US policy-making bodies from early of the 2000s, in formulating US policies and actions in the Middle East in general and Iran in particular. In this context, it is worth quoting a quotation from Trita Parsi’s book entitled *Treacherous Alliance: The Secret Dealings of Israel, Iran and the U.S.* which reads: “If in the past the United States was the Great Satan and Israel the small Satan, then today the Iranians regard Israel as the Satan that sits inside the brain of the big Satan and activates it.”<sup>40</sup> In line with this fact, Stephen Walt and John Mearsheimer have asserted in their book entitled *The Israel lobby and US Foreign Policy* (2007) that the foreign policy of the US, at least in the Middle East is practically controlled by Israel. They have even claimed that Washington D.C. is in effect an Israeli colony, while both the Senate and the House of Representatives are Israeli occupied territories, much like Ramallah and Nablus. They have finally put: “Tehran has made several attempts in recent years to improve relations with Washington and settle outstanding differences, but Israel and its American supporters have been able to stymie any détente between Iran and the United States.”<sup>41</sup> Given, scholars are in full agreement that today’s major crisis in Iran-US relations will be solved if only this Israeli factor is absent. In 2006, Scott Ritter has noted that if there is to be peace with Iran, the US must find a way to bring to reign Israel’s attempts, directly or indirectly, to unduly influence the formulation and implementation of US foreign policy.<sup>42</sup> Interestingly, although under the Obama administration the 2015 nuclear deal was achieved in this way, however, the fact is that ultimately, the US is neither going to do that nor is going to change its special relations with Israel as the US has already committed itself to a “strong Israel” in the region.

Given this reality, my analysis suggests that as Israel is always the gate to the US, Iran-US hostile relations would continue as long as Iran will not establish a workable relationship with Tel Aviv. In this connection, I would like to quote from Shireen T. Hunter who has observed: “No doubt, U.S. unwillingness to respond to Iran’s overtures has also played important roles in Iran and America’s continued estrangement. ... In the future, too, Iran will not be able to reach a *modus vivendi* with the United States unless it fully understands U.S. domestic realities and the importance of the Israel factor in its relations with America.”<sup>43</sup> While Fawaz A. Gerges has expressly elaborated that of all US grievances against Iran, American officials have been particularly annoyed at Tehran’s financial and political support for Islamist elements in the Palestinian territories (for example, HAMAS), and Lebanon (for instance, Hizbullah) in order to undermine the Arab-Israeli peace process.<sup>44</sup> Therefore, it is clear that so long as Iran will support

these Islamists groups, whom the US-Israeli allies consider terrorists organizations, Iran-US relations are not going to be normal. My study also suggests that under this reality, Iran may soften its attitude towards Israel, but will never change its policy towards the militant state Israel as set by the founder father of the Islamic regime Imam Ayatullah Khomeini and leaders in Tehran will continue to follow Khomeini's policy of supporting the Palestinians (through HAMAS and Islamic Jihad) against Israel and maintain hostility because of Israel's past support for the 'criminal Shah'. Given, the normalization of Iran-US relations has become a far distant matter.

**Ninthly**, the very nature of the 1979 Iranian Islamic Revolution and the subsequently established Islamic government and its foreign policy as defined by Iran's constitution have put a permanent barrier to the normalization of Iran-US relations. As examined in Section V of Chapter 3 and Section I of Chapter 4 that the Islamic Revolution took place on anti-American agenda while the post-revolutionary Islamic government was established by severing all associations with the US. Hence the foreign policy of the Islamic Republic of Iran has been fundamentally based on a combative and ideologically fiercely independent policy anchoring on "neither East nor West" (that is, neither pro-communist nor pro-Western alliances) slogan of the Islamic Revolution. This is especially troubling for the US. Although with time Iran sacrificed a lot to adjust its foreign relations with outside world, this is not enough for normalizing let alone strengthening its relations when it comes the Great Satan—the US. The reason is very clear. Since the adoption of Iran's constitution, Washington has been viewing it as "one of the most bizarre political documents of modern times" for the simple reason that the first sentence after the preamble of the constitution of the Islamic Republic of Iran decries "the American conspiracy known as the 'White Revolution,' which was a step intended to stabilize the foundations of despotic rule and to reinforce the political, cultural, and economic dependence of Iran on the world imperialism, ... in June 1963."<sup>45</sup> Elsewhere in the constitution the US has been described as an arrogant power. Here lies the most important rationale of continuous US hostility towards the Islamic Republic of Iran. Given such Iranian attitude toward the US which the Iran's constitution has defined and retained even after the 1989 amendment, normalization of Iran-US relations has become not only a difficult job but also an impossible matter. Every US government official is well aware of the fact that the first sentence after the preamble of the constitution of the Islamic Republic of Iran starts with a derogatory sentence about the US. After the inclusion of such derogatory comments in Iran's constitution Washington was not in the past, is not at present and will not be in future in a position to accept the Islamic Republic of Iran which means the continuation of hostility between Iran and the US in the days ahead.

**Tenthly**, US constant policy of imposing sanctions on Iran has become another major issue for which Iran's relations with the US will not be mended in any time soon. The US has perceived the Islamic Republic of Iran as a menace which has been trying to destabilize the Middle East by opposing the Arab-Israeli peace process, sponsoring terrorism, stockpiling WMD and pursuing nuclear weapons programme. In order to undermine Iran's capability to pursue these goals considered detrimental to US and its Arab-Israeli allies, Washington has declared economic warfare against Iran and targeted the country 'with a panoply of economic sanctions' since 1979. From 1995 the US 'has regularly renewed a regime of strict sanctions against Tehran' and by 2012 it has been able to impose fourth rounds of economic sanctions. The economic sanctions plus other policies of US to isolate and punish Iran have reached such point that there will be no reverse of such US policy even after the 2015 nuclear deal because of hardliners in Washington and Israel. That is why, the US is still imposing new sanctions even after withdrawing the old ones. For example, on January 17, 2016, the Obama administration imposed new sanctions immediately following the lifting of old sanctions against Iran. As of yet, the new Trump administration has already imposed three sets of sanctions (on February 3, 2017, on May 17, 2017 and on July 18, 2017) on Iran over its ballistic missile programme which for sure will be preventing future rapprochement between the two countries.

**Eleventhly**, during the last 37 years, policymakers in Washington have been surprised by the durability of the Islamic Republic of Iran and its capacity to deal with an endless series of crises and challenges since its establishment back in 1979. Without a doubt, Washington has frustrated Iran's economic development again and again through economic sanctions, and direct threats to neighbor states who wish to collaborate and cooperate with Iran on development projects.<sup>46</sup> Yet Iran remains unstoppable. It has established diplomatic relations with many countries in the world to baffle the US policy of containing or isolating Iran. This has now become an open question of prestige for the sole Superpower—the US since it has been making policies one after another to contain a Third World nation—Iran from 1979, but has completely failed to achieve the ultimate result: collapse of the Islamic regime. What is more damaging for US image is that even under US sanctions, the Islamic Republic of Iran has successfully been advancing its nuclear programme. Under the circumstance, it would be very challenging and difficult for the US to compromise its Superpower image by reducing its hostility towards a Third World country in the days to come.

**Twelfthly**, Iran's insistence on going with its nuclear programme and the virulent opposition to it by US-Israeli allies is another key issue for which Iran-US rapprochement will not be possible in the long run. Iranians in general feel that they have an absolute right to pursue nuclear energy development within the framework of NPT and the US should give up its double standard role in

this regard. But the US has developed a culture where a non-ally is generally seen as something that needs to be controlled. Iranians see the US is not in a position to accept Iran's nuclear programme while it has tacitly accepted nuclear weapons of Israel, India and Pakistan who are Iran's regional rivals. Iran has been criticizing the US for such double standard policy when it is tolerating those nuclear powers, however, at the same time it has engaged all its efforts to prevent Iran from advancing nuclear programme, not to mention nuclear weapons. This actually has cemented their belief of US conspiracy. Culturally this Iranian mindset is an impediment to the future Iran-US rapprochement.

**Thirteenthly**, although by now a nuclear deal has been signed but not all parties have accepted it. Israel, Saudi Arabia and the anti-Iran Republican Congressmen are strongly opposing the deal. Hence, there is still chance of collapsing the deal at any time in future. My study suggests that the US allies Saudi Arabia and Israel will never accept the deal any time soon and in that case, it will become quite difficult for Iran and the US to mend the damages of bad relations and to reestablish cordial relations.

**Lastly**, but most importantly, the theories of evolution-guided superiority have a tremendous influence on US domestic and foreign policy which has also caused a great degree of present inimical relations between Iran and the US and will prevent future Iran-US rapprochement. To understand the issue we need to look at the germ of the conception Darwin phrased as the "struggle for existence" and "survival of the fittest". Over time, the struggle for existence lifted from the biology of the individual to the politics of the group and by the nineteenth century the group meant the nation-state.<sup>47</sup> The struggle of the nation-state had an ultimate form: war. The war in the past showed that the victorious groups were fitter over the defeated groups. In modern day US foreign policy is outstandingly influenced by this theory and it is seen in various forms. For example, in racism that is, Western or White superiority over the blacks in domestic affairs. Since 1945 the superiority of "Capitalism" over "Communism" and it continued until the end of the Cold War in 1991. After 1991 malicious generalizations about Islam have become the last acceptable form of denigration of foreign culture in the West<sup>48</sup> and the US has been playing the leading role in establishing the superiority of Christianity over political Islam. An analyst has put: "An unstated factor in US hostility to Iran is that after 9/11, the Bush administration has opposed radical Islamists, especially in countries viewed as hostile to the United States or Israel."<sup>49</sup> Given, Washington has made Iranian revolutionary regime as its prime target and has been dealing with Tehran accordingly leaving no hopeful ground for durable future rapprochement which means the continuation of the current hostile relations of the two countries in days to come.

It is now pertinent to state that opportunities for reconciliation and rapprochement between the two countries have time and again come and gone over the past thirty five plus years but the scale and intensity of their enmity has only enhanced. This study clearly shows that in the past especially since 1989 Iran had attempted many times (for example, in 1989, 1995, 1997, 2001, 2003, and 2004) with real intention to mend its relations with the US in a bid to end their enmity, but the US was seen as an unwilling party to do so. That is, the US neither tried genuinely to resolve any issues with Iran nor made any attempt to mend its severed relations with the country. Every time the US adopted a ploy and used Iranian assistance for its own purposes, and when Iran expected reward for the crucial assistance it had provided to the US in different critical times, Iran has been humiliated and punished in return. Credible evidences show that in the past, the US government prevented the reaching of a settlement between Iran and Europe on Iran's nuclear issue, which could have closed this chapter before the issue came to the UNSC in 2006-2007.<sup>50</sup> The question remains, then what is the objective of the US? My study suggests that the US did not want in the past and does not want now a real rapprochement with Iran. This US stance will continue even after the 2015 nuclear deal. My study also suggests that the 2015 nuclear deal is a US tactic to kill time to wait for an opportune moment to start a military operation against Iran for regime change and for undoing Tehran's nuclear programme.

For better or worse, the US has sat with Iran over Tehran's nuclear programme when the US has completely failed to prevent Iran from advancing nuclear programme, when the US has become unsuccessful to bring down Iran's ally Bashar al-Assad regime in Syria,<sup>51</sup> and when the US has come to the realization that without Iran's assistance controlling the menace of the Islamic State or IS in the Middle East is highly unlikely as stated in section III of chapter 5. The coincidence of the two events that is, Iran-US nuclear talks within the periphery of the P5+1 group and the subsequent 2015 deal and the rise of the Islamic State helps us to conclude that US motive of striking the deal is for a short-term (for coping with the IS who are "committing genocide against Christians" and Shia Muslims as US Secretary of State claims<sup>52</sup>) and not to bridge with Iran for a long-term.<sup>53</sup> This will bring about similar result as in 1989, 2001 and 2003 when Iran had provided crucial assistance to achieve US goals, but Iran was not rewarded.

Then how long will this hostility between Iran and the US persist is now a key question to be answered? Right this moment it is difficult to write or to state with any degree of certainty that how long the current state of hostile and inimical relations between Iran and the US will prevail. At present, the US wants Iran to stop enriching uranium and Washington has got Tehran to this point through the July 2015 nuclear deal. Conversely, US vital ally in the Middle East Israel wants Iran to stop the whole process of its nuclear programme. In this context, the best that can be said as

of writing this conclusion and predicting a future of Iran-US relations is that in the long run, the US-Israel allies might make Iran's nuclear programme an issue or pretext for which Iran will again be economically punished and politically isolated if any military action is not possible in the near future. But if possible, the US-Israeli allies will definitely start a military operation against Iran. The US and its ally Israel will do this for sure at an opportune moment and this involves many *whens* and *ors*. The US-Israeli allies will go for a military conflict *when* they will be able to limit Iran's influence to its own geographical periphery *or when* they will be able to break the relationship between Iran and HAMAS, Iran and Syria, Iran and Hizbullah, *or when* they will neutralize Russia, *or when* the Shia-Sunni rift in the Middle East will climax Iran-Saudi hot war and of course, *when* the Americans will have an anti-Iran President like former anti-Iran President George Bush (2001-2008). There is no dispute that Israel has been ceaselessly working to that end to create an opportune moment to start a war against Iran since the removal of Iraq's Saddam Hussein in 2003 not only by targeting and weakening Iran's proxies HAMAS, Hizbullah and Syria but also by instigating and manipulating Saudi-Iran rivalry in the region.

Israel has already occupied the American mind and now it has been poisoning everyone in the US from the President to the Congress to policymakers and officials to common people and influencing them for starting a war against Iran. Scott Ritter has expressly stated in this regard: "Israel and the Israeli Lobby are herding America down the path toward war with Iran, and most Americans remain ignorant and/ or indifferent to this fact. ... No one in the world wants such a confrontation, only Israel. Let there be no doubt: if there is an American war with Iran, it is a war that was made in Israel and nowhere else."<sup>54</sup> Other scholars have supported this view and said Israel was (and is) the only country in the globe which advocated in past and is advocating now the military option against Iran if it does not end its nuclear programme.<sup>55</sup> Now let me clear about how an Israeli-instigated and US-involved war (with tacit Saudi support) may start against Iran. The 2015 deal and subsequent ease of economic pressure from Iran may be compared with US recognition of Nasser's influence on the Arabian Peninsula in 1962 despite the fact that the US-Israel allies still considered Nasser's growing influence in the Arab world as a potential threat to their interests in the region. Washington's close ally Saudi Arabia also got furious at the US government when it recognized Nasser-supported North Yemen Arab Republic. However, as the Arab Cold War intensified between Nasser's Egypt and King Faisal's Saudi Arabia from the mid-1960s over their proxy war in Yemen, US ally Israel with Washington's tacit consent secretly initiated the June 1967 war and destroyed Egypt's military might in a sudden and surprise airstrike code-named Operation Focus.<sup>56</sup> Overtly Saudi Arabia reacted angrily by cutting off oil supplies to the US and UK for supporting Israel, however, covertly Riyadh was happy to see that Israeli action



shifted the Arab leadership from Nasser to King Faisal's side overnight. Following the event the US-Israeli allies as well as Saudi Arabia celebrated the destruction of Egypt's military might.

Similarly, apprehensive of Iran's increasing influence in the Middle East even after taking punitive actions and policies to contain Iran for the last 35 years, the US has finally adopted policy of appeasement towards Iran and inked the July 2015 deal with the country over its nuclear programme. Then in mid-January 2016 the US withdrew its own sanctions and supported the withdrawal of UN-backed sanctions imposed on Iran since 1979. My prediction is that this may be a temporary conciliatory US policy towards Iran like the ones it had adopted towards hostile state Egypt in 1962 as just stated, while Washington's long-term goal might be the destruction of Iran's nuclear facilities and with them the Islamic regime with the help of its Middle East vital ally—militant Israel—by inciting an Arab-Persian Cold War at an opportune moment. In that case, Saudi Arabia and other Arab Muslim countries who are US allies would certainly be happy to see Iran's nuclear programme is undone by US ally Israel or by a combined US-Israeli war. Saudi Arabia—another important ally of the US—has by this time formed a 34-nation nation alliance with Sunni Muslim countries with the stated motive to fight the Islamic State (IS) militants. Given the current trends of Iran-Saudi relations, the US-Israeli allies might influence Saudi Arabia to use this alliance against Iran at an opportune moment taking the advantage of Shia-Sunni divide or the Iran-Saudi cold War over Iran's nuclear programme and Iran's hegemonic aspirations in the region.<sup>57</sup> At present, the Trump administration, which has halted the direct contacts initiated by his predecessor Barack Obama and which has been constantly blasting Iran for not “living up to the spirit” of the “horrible agreement” of 2015, is plagued by many domestic (for example, his controversial involvement with the Russians during the 2016 Presidential Election campaign to tilt the election in his favour, his controversial steps towards Muslim ban in the US, his failed attempt to undo Obama's Healthcare policy etc.) and international issues (for instance, the curtailment of US involvement in Europe, the threat of North Korea's nuclear programme, the US quagmire in the Middle East etc), however, once it will be free from these problematic issues (including a possible future risk of being an impeachment of President Trump himself as the events are developing to that end following his son's involvement in secret meeting with the Russians to divert the 2016 Presidential Election result), it may quickly move militarily against Iran, of course, with Israeli instigation. *Or* it may take another anti-Iran regime in Washington to get involved militarily with Iran. The matter of the fact is that a future military confrontation between Iran and the US has become unavoidable, and it is inevitable in the long run. However, it remains to be seen how and exactly when this Iran-US confrontational relationship will be staged. Let the time and history be the ultimate judge in this regard.

## Notes and References of Chapter 8

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28. Kenneth M. Pollack, *The Persian Puzzle: ...*, *op. cit.*, p. 235.
29. *O, cit.*, p. xx.
30. For detail see: chapter 8 and 9 of William O. Beeman, *The "Great Satan" VS. The "Mad Mullahs": How the United States and Iran Demonize Each Other*.
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  46. William O. Beeman, *The "Great Satan" VS. The "Mad Mullahs": ...*, *op. cit.*, p. 92.
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  48. Edward W. Said, *Covering Islam: ...*, *op. cit.*, p. xii.
  49. Mohamed A. El-Khaws, 'Iran's Nuclear Controversy: ...', *op. cit.*, pp. 22-26.
  50. Shireen T. Hunter, *Iran's Foreign Policy in the Post-Soviet Era: ...*, *op. cit.*, p. 65.
  51. The US-Israeli allies and Saudi Arabia generally view that a regime change in Syria will offer an opportunity to roll back the influence of Teheran in the region, which has been on the rise since the 2003 Iraq war, and to strengthen their own position. Beyond this, some US-American (and Israeli) strategists hope that a defeat in the Levant would weaken Teheran sufficiently to force it to back down on other contentious issues, such as its nuclear programme. It is also expected that Iran-backed Lebanese Hizbullah would be weakened by a shift in power in Syria as the latter is the most important transit country for arms deliveries to the Hizbullah. Contrarily, Iran interprets the US against Bashar al-Assad as part of a comprehensive US-Israeli strategy fighting the Islamic Republic. Regime change in Damascus would, according to Iran, only be a precursor to regime change in Teheran. Therefore, Iran stands side by side with Bashar al-Assad regime which is being also supported by Russia.
  52. 'Kerry declares ISIS committing genocide against Christians, others', *Fox News*, March 17, 2016, <http://www.foxnews.com/politics/2016/03/17/kerry-determines-isis-committing-genocide-in-iraq-syria.html>
  53. Because the US has the full knowledge that the destroying of IS or ISIS could lead to the emergence of a powerful Iranian empire which the US never wants to accept. Moreover, the US ally Sunni state Saudi Arabia has been strongly opposing Washington's inclusion of Iran to combat the IS. Therefore, the total destruction of IS or ISIS is beyond imagination and so is the Iran-US alliance.
  54. Scott Ritter, *Target Iran: ...*, *op. cit.*, p. 211.
  55. John J. Mearsheimer and Stephen M. Walt, *The Israel Lobby and U.S. Foreign Policy*, *op. cit.*, p. 302.
  56. US ally Israel conducted a similar airstrike in 1981 when during the ongoing Iran-Iraq War, its air force completely destroyed Iraq's nuclear plant at Osirak by the Operation Opera.
  57. As of now, the US has succeeded in creating hostile relations between Iran and Saudi Arabia. Widely held view is that intolerant of or fearful of Iran's growing influence following the 2015 nuclear deal with the US, the Saudi authority on January 4, 2016, executed 40 Shia dissidents including a religious leader Sheikh Nimr al-Nimr for treason which caused a big crack in Saudi-Iran relations. After the incident, Saudi Embassy in Tehran was burnt which eventually resulted in the break-up of Riyadh-Tehran diplomatic relations. Saudi-Iran relations have also been soured over the Yemen civil war (where two opposing parties are supporting their respective proxies) and the current crisis in the Persian Gulf over the Qatar issue. However, whatever is happening in estranging Iran-Saudi relations, it is going to benefit the US-Israeli allies.

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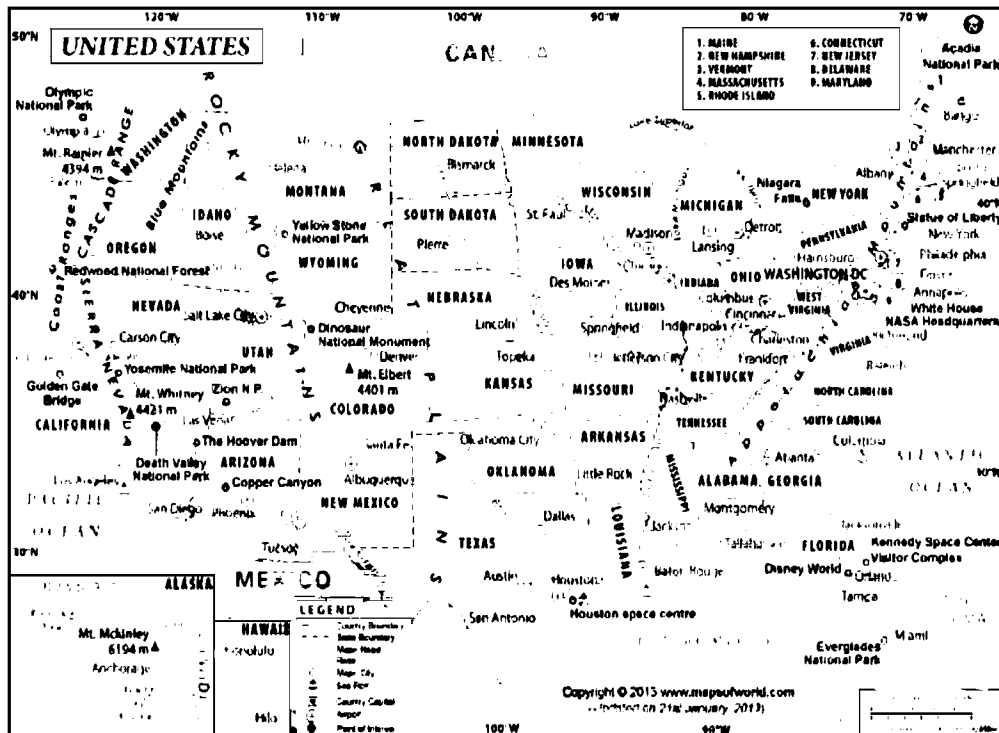
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## Appendices

### I. Map of the Islamic Republic of Iran



### II. Map of the US (United States)

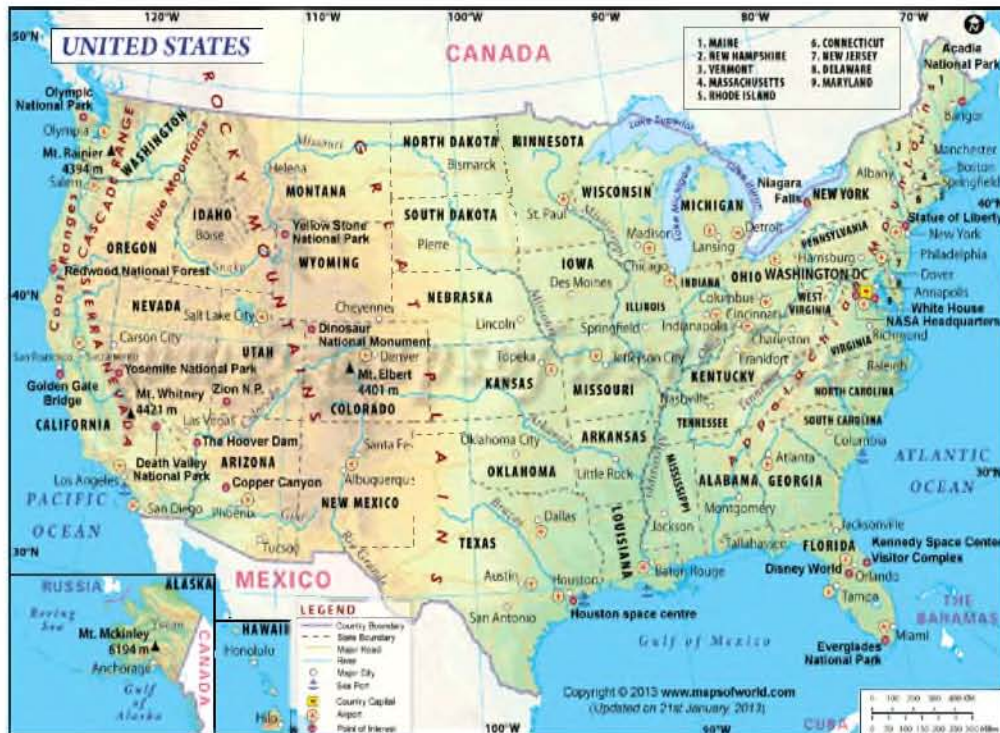


## Appendices

### I. Map of the Islamic Republic of Iran



### II. Map of the US (United States)



**III.** The Shah and President Roosevelt were seen in a meeting at the Soviet Embassy in Tehran, 1943.



**Source:** <http://rusrealart.ru/en/media/catalog/detail/1540/>

**IV.** The Shah and President Harry Truman wave hats as they enter the Blair House on November 16, 1949 in Washington after Shah's arrival.



**Source:** <http://blogs.denverpost.com/captured/2013/10/03/iran-historic-photos/6429/>



- V. The CIA-induced Shah's order, known as a royal *firman* naming General Fazlullah Zahedi—the new Prime Minister deposing Dr. Mohammad Mosaddeq (issued on August 12, 1953). The 1953 coup operatives made copies of the document and circulated it around Tehran to help regenerate momentum following the collapse of the original plan on August 16, 1953 but succeeded on August 19, 1953.



Source: National Security Archive Electronic Briefing Book No. 435, available at:  
<http://www2.gwu.edu/~nsarchiv/NSAEBB/NSAEBB435/>

- VI. The Shah and President Eisenhower in the White House, December 13, 1954.



Source: <http://iranian.com/Pictory/2005/April/p1.html>

## VII. An Evidence of the Shah's Buying US support

PAHLAVI FOUNDATION				
Checks Drawn on Account 214895, 20 H Cpte \$ Union Bank of Switzerland, Geneva <sup>1</sup>				
<u>Date</u>	<u>Recipient</u>	<u>Nationality</u>	<u>Position (1962)</u>	<u>Amount (\$)</u>
2/5/62	Royal Family (10 checks)	Iranian	Shah's relatives	29,000,000
	Mrs. Loy Henderson	US	Wife of former US Ambassador*	1,000,000
	Hossein Ala	Iranian	Former Prime Minister	1,000,000
	Henry R. Luce	US	Publisher, <u>Time</u> , <u>Life</u> , <u>Fortune</u> <sup>a</sup>	500,000
	Allen Dallas (sic)*	US	Director, CIA	1,000,000
	Seldin Chapin	US	Former Ambassador to Iran	1,000,000
	George V. Allen	US	Former Ambassador, Former Assistant Secy. of State	1,000,000
	R.A. Pigot	UK	British Admiral, Middle East Fleet	1,000,000
	T.W. Piper	UK	Cmdr. RAF Middle East '60-62	1,000,000
	William Warn (sic)	US	Dir. Point Four Iran, '51-55	1,000,000
	Ali Amiri	Iranian	P.M. of Iran, 5/61-7/62	2,000,000
	David Rockefeller <sup>2</sup>	US	Chm. Chase Manhattan Bank etc.	2,000,000
	Ardeshir Zahedi <sup>3</sup>	Iranian	Former Admin. Deputy, USAID (now Ambassador to US)	3,000,000
	4/22/62	Edwin Thorne	US	Sr. V.P., Mid-East Affairs, First National City Bank
Charles M. Cariddi		US	Secy., US Embassy, Teheran	100,000
Howard W. Page		US	V.P., Standard Oil N.J. <sup>†</sup> ; Dir., Aramco; Dir. Near East Foundation	300,000
Adolphe A. Juviler		US	Chm., Thompson-Starrett Co. <sup>b</sup>	300,000
Lyle J. Hayden		US	Exec. Dir., Near East Foundation	500,000
J. Ward Keener <sup>4</sup>		US	Chm., B.F. Goodrich & Co.	500,000
Harold E. Gray		US	Exec. VP, Pan American Airways	500,000
James L. Tollion		US	Exec., Bank of America Intern't <sup>1</sup>	500,000
George Parkhurst		US	VP, Standard Oil of California <sup>†</sup>	500,000
Cleveland E. Dodge		US	VP, Phelps-Dodge Corp.; Chm., Near East Foundation	500,000
5/22/62	L.G. Davis	US	Exec. VP, Gulf Oil Corp. <sup>†</sup>	500,000

Source: Helmut Richards, 'America's Shah Shahanshah's Iran', *Middle East Research and Information Project (MERIP) Reports*, No. 40, September 1975, p. 22.

**VIII.** Meeting of the Shah of Iran with President Kennedy and Secretary of Defense Robert McNamara at the White House Cabinet Room on April 13, 1962.



Source: <http://iranian.com/Pictory/2003/February/s4.html>

**IX.** The Shah and President Lyndon B. Johnson, White House, 1964



Source: <https://clpidiovaldes.files.wordpress.com/2012/07/shah-johnson.jpg>

- X. Iran's Shah with US President Richard Nixon during the Special and Partnership Relations between Iran and the US. They were seen to share happy moments at the Oval Office in 1973.



Source: <http://iranpoliticsclub.net/photos/shah-farah3/index.htm>

- XI. The Shah and President Gerald Ford at the White House, 1974



Source: <http://iranian.com/Pictory/2003/February/s19.html>

- XII.** The Shah and Iraqi Vice President Saddam Hussein during the Algiers agreement on March 6, 1975. Mediated by Algerian President Boumediene this agreement was meant to end the disputes between Iraq and Iran on their borders in Shatt al-Arab and Khuzestan. The Shah, who had followed an independent foreign policy in inking this agreement with Iraq bullying his former patron—the US, later visited Baghdad.



**Source:** [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/1975\\_Algers\\_Agreement#/media/File:Saddam\\_%26\\_Shah\\_\(1975\).png](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/1975_Algers_Agreement#/media/File:Saddam_%26_Shah_(1975).png)

- XIII.** Postal cover from Iran commemorating the 200th anniversary of the American Revolution.

بنابست دوستمن سالگرد بنیانگذاری  
ایالات متحده آمریکا  
۱۷۷۵ - ۱۹۷۵



( Translation ) July 4 1975  
IRAN gives homage to the UNITED STATES  
OF AMERICA ON THE 200th anniversary of  
their revolution. Greetings from one of the  
worlds most ancient Nations to one of  
the NEWEST

**Source:** <http://iranian.com/Nostalgia/2002/October/usa.html>

XIV. President Gerald Ford's Letter to the Shah, 1976

THE WHITE HOUSE  
WASHINGTON

February 21, 1976

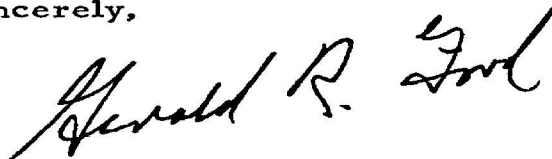
Your Imperial Majesty:

I appreciate your agreement to meet with Dr. Seamans and Under Secretary Maw to exchange views on the use of nuclear energy and our proposed nuclear power agreement. Given our desire to cooperate closely in this important field, I know that your Imperial Majesty shares our wish to see this agreement brought to a successful conclusion.

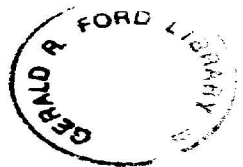
It is well known that under your leadership Iran has played a leading role in supporting the Non-Proliferation Treaty and other efforts to abate the spread of nuclear weapons. I know that you and I share the same desire to foster the goal of non-proliferation. I believe that Iran and the United States may have a unique opportunity to provide vital international leadership in helping to ensure that the sensitive aspect of the nuclear fuel cycle evolves in a manner that reassures the world.

In view of the special relationship between our countries and our strong desire for the secure development of nuclear energy, I have requested Dr. Seamans and Mr. Maw to explain to you how our specific proposals fit into our broader non-proliferation policies. I will be deeply interested in your own views and concerns. Dr. Seamans and Mr. Maw will report to me promptly upon their return.

Sincerely,



His Imperial Majesty  
Mohammad Reza Pahlavi  
Shahanshah of Iran  
Tehran



Source: "Iran-The Shah (1)", Gerald R. Ford Presidential Library Document Box 2, available at:  
<http://www.fordlibrarymuseum.gov/library/document/0351/1555814.pdf>

- XV. The Shah's last visit to the US: The Shah and his wife Farah Diba on the White House lawn while US President Jimmy Carter delivers a speech. The Shah is affected by tear gas thrown by the police to control anti-Shah demonstrators in front of the White House November 15, 1977).



Source: <http://iranian.com/Times/Subs/Revolution/April99/shahcarter1.html>

- XVI. President Jimmy Carter's last visit to the Shah (December 31, 1977-1 January, 1978). William Sullivan, President Carter, King Hussein of Jordan and the Shah of Iran share a drink on the eve of celebrating the New Year 1978. Although Carter praised the stable Iranian government in the volatile Middle East region and described the Shah a "good friend" he did not go to retain his friend when he was falling in 1979.



Source: <http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/obituaries/10450380/William-Sullivan-Obituary.html>

- XVII.** President Jimmy Carter and the First Lady are shown with the Shah of Iran and his family at the Niravran Palace in Tehran on New Year's Eve, 12-31-1977. Despite happy moments the Shah looked very gloomy, perhaps, realizing his days were being finished on the onset the Islamic Revolution in full while he could not rely on the US support.



Source: <https://diplomatdc.files.wordpress.com/2011/01/carter.jpg>

- XVIII.** Banner reads: "43,000 military advisors OUT OF IRAN." Members of Americans for Independence and Democracy in Iran (AIDI) demonstrating against US involvement in Iran in Oklahoma City on November 16, 1978.



Source: <http://iranian.com/Times/Subs/Revolution/1999/May/us.html>



**XIX.** Anti-American message affixed to automobile in Tehran, 1979.



**Source:** *Time* magazine, January 8, 1979,  
<http://iranian.com/Times/Subs/Revolution/1999/May/yankee.html>

**XX.** CIA with the Shah's (Pahlavi) Crown. The cartoon published around 1979 just before or after the revolution which obviously shows US extensive influence in Iran.



**Source:** <http://iranian.com/Pictory/2003/February/cia.html>

- XXI. Iranian Press (*Ettela'at*) on the Shah's departure of Iran (January 16, 1979) which put an end to the 26+ years of Iran-US close relations. The heading reads "Shah Raft" which meant "The Shah Went".



Source: *Ettela'at*, January 16, 1979, <http://iranian.com/Times/Subs/Revolution/Jan99/raft.html>

- XXII. Iranian Press (*Ettela'at*) on the Imam Ayatullah Khomeini's return to Iran after fifteen years of exile which ended the Shah's rule for ever and along with Iran-US close relations. The headline reads: "Imam Amad" meaning "The Imam Returned". Later Ayatullah Imam Khomeini derogatorily called the US as "Great Satan" and remained uncompromising towards the US during his period (1979-1989) as Iran's Supreme Leader.



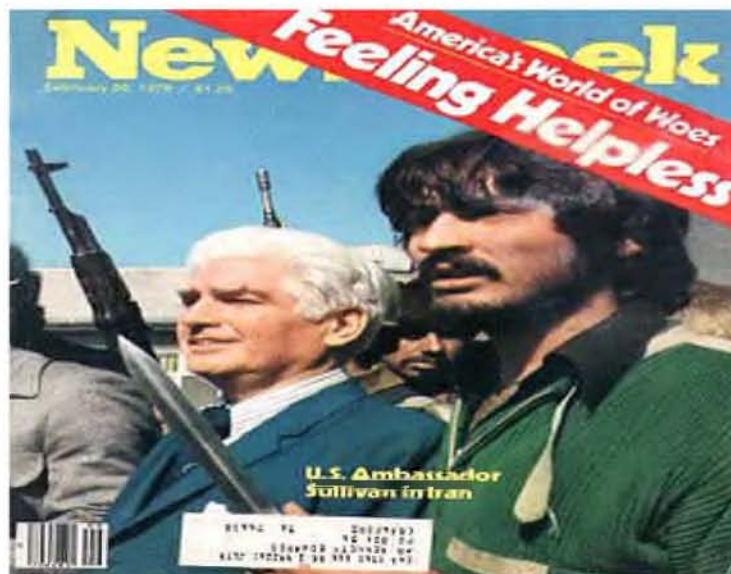
Source: *Ettela'at*, February 1, 1978, <http://iranian.com/Jan96/History/Images/Feb1.gif>

**XXIII.** The fall of the US-backed Shah and Imam Ayatollah Khomeini in a miniature: Imam Khomeini in the role of a Moses victorious over the evil Pharaoh—the Shah with broken crown and sword, hanging on to the coattails of imperialism; an Uncle Sam [Uncle Sam is a common national personification of the US government or the US in general] with American, British and Israeli insignia. The verses say (upper right): “We said: Fear not! Lo, thou art the higher” (Qur’an 20:68); “Go thou unto Pharaoh! Lo, he hath transgressed” (Qur’an 20:24); “He [God] said: Cast it down, O Moses! So he cast it down, and, lo, it was a serpent, gliding” (Qur’an 20:19-20). The single line below reads: “There is a Moses for every Pharaoh” (not a Qur’anic line). To the left the verses read: “In that day their excuses will not profit those who did injustice” (Qur’an 30:57); “Theirs is the curse and theirs the ill abode” (Qur’an 13:25). A hell of tortures is portrayed in the upper left.



**Source:** Michael M. J. Fischer, *Iran: From Religious Dispute to Revolution*, The University of Wisconsin Press, 1980, p. 182.

**XXIV.** The first US Embassy takeover (February 14, 1979): Gunmen guard US envoy William Sullivan. The event was the first warning to the US for Washington’s clandestine involvement in post revolutionary Iran.



**Source:** *Newsweek*, February 26, 1979,

<http://iranian.com/Times/Subs/Revolution/March99/newsweek.html>

XXV. US Embassy staff blindfolded by students of Tehran University who took over the Embassy on November 4, 1979. The event remains till date as one of the key issues for Iran-US hostility.



Source: <http://iranian.com/Pictory/2002/November/host1.html>

XXVI. Two evidently different stamps depicting US Hostage Crisis printed in Iran and the US.



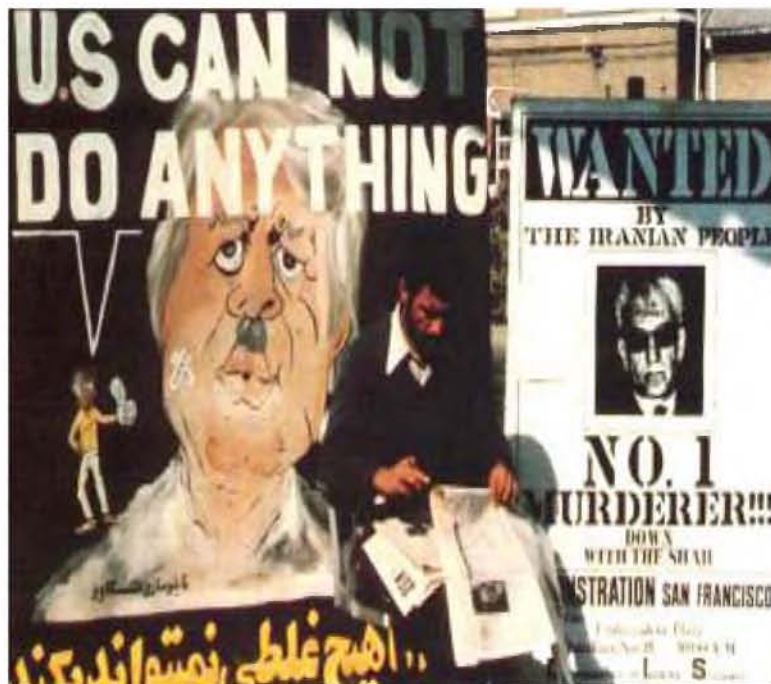
Source: [http://fouman.com/Y/Get\\_Iranian\\_History\\_Today.php?artid=247](http://fouman.com/Y/Get_Iranian_History_Today.php?artid=247)

**XXVII.** A propeller from the burned US C-130 cargo plane used in the aborted commando raid to rescue the US Embassy hostages lies amidst the plane's wreckage in the eastern Iranian desert of *Dasht-e-Kavir*, April 27, 1980. Eight members of the raiding party died in a crash of the cargo plane and a helicopter.



Source: <http://blogs.denverpost.com/captured/2013/10/03/iran-historic-photos/6429/>

**XXVIII.** Anti-Carter and anti-Shah postcards, 1979.



Source: <http://iranian.com/Pictory/2002/December/us12.html>

**XXIX.** Yasser Arafat meets Imam Ayatullah Khomeini in Tehran in the wake of the 1979 Islamic Revolution. After the fall of the monarchy, Iran closed the Israeli embassy in Tehran and turned it over to the PLO (right) which has been one of points of contention between Iran and the US. In the picture of the right, a jubilant Arafat (second from left) takes possession of the PLO's new 'embassy'. Iran's Foreign Minister Ibrahim Yazdi, first left; Ahmad Khomeini, third right are seen with Yasser Arafat.



**Sources:** *Newsweek*, March 5, 1979, <http://iranian.com/Times/Subs/Revolution/Feb99/arafat.html> ;  
*Newsweek*, March 5, 1979, <http://iranian.com/Times/Subs/Revolution/March99/plo.html>

**XXX.** During the Iran-Iraq War (1980-1988) US special envoy Donald Rumsfeld visited Baghdad to forge union with Saddam Hussein against Iran. This led to restore Iraq-US relations in 1984 while Saddam Hussein with US backing used CW against the Iranians forces during the war which is one of the crucial factors of today's hostility between Tehran and Washington.



Reagan White House Middle East Special Envoy **Donald Rumsfeld** shakes hands with Iraqi Dictator **Saddam Hussein** during his visit on December 19-20, 1983. Rumsfeld would visit again on March 24, 1984, the day the U.N. released a report that mustard gas and Tabun nerve gas had been used by Iraq against Iranian troops. The *New York Times* reported from Baghdad on March 29, 1984, "American diplomats pronounce themselves satisfied with relations between Iraq and the United States and suggest that normal diplomatic ties have been restored in all but name."

**Source:** <https://rajivawijesinha.wordpress.com/category/international-affairs/>

XXXI. The Iranian Grand Bargain Agenda or Offer to the US which the latter flatly rejected thus Washington missed an opportunity for rapprochement with Tehran. The Iranian authorities sent the following negotiation proposal to the US via the Swiss in May 2003.

**Iranian aims:**

(The US accepts a dialogue “in mutual respect” and agrees that Iran puts the following aims on the agenda)

- **Halt in US hostile behavior and rectification of status of Iran in the US:** (interference in internal or external relations, “axis of evil”, terrorism list.)
- **Abolishment of all sanctions:** commercial sanctions, frozen assets, judgments (FSIA), impediments in international trade and financial institutions.
- **Iraq:** democratic and fully representative government in Iraq, support of Iranian claims for Iraqi reparations, respect for Iranian national interests in Iraq and religious links to Najaf/Karbala.
- **Full access to peaceful nuclear technology, biotechnology and chemical technology.**
- Recognition of **Iran’s legitimate security interests** in the region with according defense capacity.
- **Terrorism:** pursuit of anti-Iranian terrorists, above all MKO and support for repatriation of their members in Iraq, decisive action against anti-Iranian terrorists, above all MKO and affiliated organizations in the US.

**US aims:** (Iran accepts a dialogue “in mutual respect” and agrees that the US puts the following aims on the agenda)

- **WMD:** full transparency for security that there are no Iranian endeavors to develop or possess WMD, full cooperation with IAEA based on Iranian adoption of all relevant instruments (93+2 and all further IAEA protocols)
- **Terrorism:** decisive action against any terrorists (above all Al Qaida) on Iranian territory, full cooperation and exchange of all relevant information.
- **Iraq:** coordination of Iranian influence for activity supporting political stabilization and the establishment of democratic institutions and a non-religious government.
- **Middle East:**
  - 1) stop of any material support to Palestinian opposition groups ( Hamas, Jihad etc.) from Iranian territory, pressure on these organizations to stop violent action against civilians within borders of 1967.
  - 2) action on Hizbollah to become a mere political organization within Lebanon
  - 3) acceptance of the Arab League Beirut declaration (Saudi initiative, twostates-approach)

**Steps:**

I. communication of **mutual agreement on the following procedure**

II. **mutual simultaneous statements** “We have always been ready for direct and authoritative talks with the US/with Iran in good faith and with the aim of discussing—in mutual respect—our common interests and our mutual concerns based on merits and objective realities, but we have always made it clear that, such talks can only be held, if genuine progress for a solution of our own concerns can be achieved.”

III. **a first direct meeting** on the appropriate level (for instance in Paris) will be held **with the previously agreed aims**

a. of a **decision on the first mutual steps**

- **Iraq:** establishment of a common group, active Iranian support for Iraqi stabilization, US-commitment to actively support Iranian reparation claims within the discussions on Iraq foreign debts.
- **Terrorism:** US-commitment to disarm and remove MKO from Iraq and take action in accordance with SCR1373 against its leadership, Iranian commitment for enhanced action against Al Qaida members in Iran, agreement on cooperation and information exchange
- Iranian general statement “to support a peaceful solution in the **Middle East** involving the parties concerned”
- US general statement that “Iran did not belong to ‘the axis of evil’”
- US-acceptance to halt its impediments against Iran in international financial and trade institutions

b. **of the establishment of three parallel working groups** on disarmament, regional security and economic cooperation. Their **aim is an agreement on three parallel road maps**, for the discussions of these working groups, each side accepts that the other side’s aims (see above) are put on the agenda:

- 1) **Disarmament:** road map, which combines the mutual aims of, on the one side, full transparency by international commitments and guarantees to abstain from WMD with, on the other side, full access to western technology (in the three areas)
- 2) **Terrorism and regional security:** road map for above mentioned aims on the Middle East and terrorism
- 3) **Economic cooperation:** road map for the abolishment of the sanctions, rescinding of judgments, and un-freezing of assets

c. of agreement on a time-table for implementation

d. and of a **public statement after this first meeting on the achieved agreements**

**Source:** Trita Parsi, *Treacherous Alliance: The Secret Dealings of Israel, Iran, and the U.S.*, Yale University Press, USA, 2007, pp. 341-342.

XXXII. Major Iranian Nuclear Sites: Possible Future Targets of US-Israeli Military Action



**Source:** Thérèse Delpech, *Iran and the Bomb: The Abdication of International Responsibility*, (translated from French by Ros Schwartz), Columbia University Press, New York, 2006, p. viii. See also: Patrick M. Cronin, *Double Trouble: Iran and North Korea as Challenges to International Security*, Praeger Security International, USA, 2008, p. 160.

XXXIII. Anti-US sentiment still prevails in Iran. The picture on the top shows “*Marg bar Amrica*” meaning “Death to America”. This slogan was written on a wall in Shiraz or Tehran in 1981. The picture below is a recent one which holds many such anti-American slogans.



**Sources:** For the above picture: <http://iranian.com/Pictory/2003/January/usa.html>, for the picture below: *The New York Times*, February 11, 2014. <http://www.nytimes.com/2014/02/12/world/middleeast/anniversary-of-islamic-revolution-in-iran.html>



## **Brief Chronology of Iran-US Relations**

- December 18, 1830: The first American missionaries visited Iran and developed cultural link between Iran and the US.
- December 13, 1856: Iran and the US signed a Treaty of Friendship and Commerce.
- June 11, 1883: Iran and the US established full diplomatic relations. The first US diplomatic envoy named S.G.W. Benjamin presented his credentials to Iran's ruler Nasiruddin Shah.
- June 13, 1911: The first US economic mission under Morgan Shuster started work in Iran.
- July 18, 1924: US Vice Consul in Tehran by the name of Robert W. Imbrie was killed in a mob attack which appeared as the first temporary setback to Iran-US diplomatic relations.
- January 1936: Iran's Reza Shah suspended Tehran's diplomatic relations with Washington.
- January 1939: The US restored diplomatic relations with Iran.
- August 27, 1944: The US legation in Tehran was raised to the status of an Embassy.
- October 6, 1947: A military accord was signed between Iran and the US which was the first indication of the growth of close bilateral relations between the two countries.
- Nov.-Dec. 1949: Mohammad Reza Shah Pahlavi made his first historic official visit to the US for seeking economic and military aid.
- August 19, 1953: The CIA intervened and overthrew Iran's nationalist and democratically elected Prime Minister Dr. Mohammad Mosaddeq through a coup d'état code-named Operation AJAX which appeared as the origin of the Iran-US divide.
- August 22, 1953: The Shah, accompanied by the head of the CIA John Allen Dulles, returned to Tehran on a US military plane and thus a new vista of multi-dimensioned Iran-US relations opened.
- December 9, 1953: The US vice President Richard Nixon made an important official visit to Iran as a strong sign of American support for the Shah's regime.
- 1957: The CIA and MOSSAD helped Iran create SAVAK—the 'police-state monster' by which US client—the Shah was able to retain power and contain the opposition.
- March 5, 1959: Iran and the US concluded a bilateral defense agreement that actually formalized a US commitment to Iran.
- December 14, 1959: The US President Eisenhower paid a state visit to Iran which demonstrated US increasing strategic and financial involvement in the country.
- October 13, 1964: Iran under the Shah approved the Status of Forces Agreement (SOFA), also known as the "Capitulations Agreement" in Iran which provided US military personnel stationed in Iran with full diplomatic immunity. The SOFA eventually appeared as the one of the determining factors of anti-Americanism in Iran.
- October 27, 1964: In a speech Khomeini said: "America is worse than Britain; Britain is worse than America. The Soviet Union is worse than both of them."
- June 1969: The Nixon Doctrine was announced and Iran was bound with Saudi Arabia in Washington's "twin pillars" strategy in the Persian Gulf region. This new status of Iran opened a new phase of Iran-US special and partnership relationship.
- January 1973: Iran's Shah took over all the operations and ownership of the Western oil consortium operating in Iran which placed the Shah on a collision course with the US.
- March 5, 1975: The Shah and Iraq's Vice President Saddam Hussein concluded the Algiers Agreement without informing the US-Israeli allies which made the Shah unpredictable partner.
- September 9, 1975: The US President Gerald Ford requested the Shah to back the reduction of oil prices.
- September 11, 1975: The Shah responded sharply negatively which strained Iran-US relations a lot.
- Nov. 14-18, 1977: Shah's last visit to the US which was met with anti-Shah demonstrations.
- Dec. 31-Jan. 1, 1978: President Carter's visit to the Shah.
- September 8, 1978: The US-backed Shah's army staged a bloodbath on the revolutionaries at the Jaleh Square (now Behest-e Square) later became known as the Black Friday. The Black Friday was a turning point in Iran-US relations given the fact that the US government

- continued to support the Shah even after the massacre and the opposition took all-embracing struggle against the Shah in response.
- November 9, 1978: US Ambassador to Iran William Sullivan wrote the historic 'bombshell' cable message entitled "Thinking the Unthinkable" indicating Iran without the Shah.
- January 4, 1979: At the US suggestion, the Shah appointed Shahpour Bakhtiar Iran's Prime Minister who previously indicated that if he formed government he would not cut off the supply of oil to Israel, to form government. The US government quickly lent its support to Bakhtiar's government and asked Iran's military leaders to support Prime Minister Bakhtiar.
- January 8, 1979: President Carter sent a secret message to Khomeini through the French President Giscard d'Estaing requesting not to oppose the Bakhtiar government.
- January 10, 1979: Ayatullah Imam Khomeini announced that Iran could have good relations with the US if it stopped supporting the Shah and ceased interference in Iranian internal affairs.
- January 16, 1979: US long-time ally—the Shah along with his wife Farah Diba left Iran. Iranians held frenzied celebrations with anti-American slogans: "*Shah raft! Shah raft!*" ("The Shah is gone! "The Shah is gone!"), "We got rid of the Shah, Now it's the Americans' turn", "Yankee go home, the Shah is dead."
- February 11, 1979: The revolutionaries brought down the Shah-appointed Bakhtiar's government which ended the 26+ years of Iran-US close bilateral relations.
- February 14, 1979: The Marxist revolutionaries seized the US Embassy in Tehran for a short time.
- February 19, 1979: Iran severed diplomatic relations with US vital ally in the Middle East—Israel.
- May 13, 1979: The Islamic Republic of Iran announced that the SOFA has been rescinded.
- May 17, 1979: The US Senate took up a resolution (known as the May 17 Resolution) condemning Iran in the strongest possible terms for the revolutionary executions which angered Khomeini and his followers hugely.
- October 22, 1979: The US government admitted the Shah into a US hospital for the treatment of his cancer.
- November 3, 1979: Iran repealed the Iran-US bilateral agreement of 1959.
- November 4, 1979: Some Tehran University students took the possession of US Embassy in Tehran and held 52 Americans for 444 days which resulted in the Hostage Crisis of 1979-1981.
- November 5, 1979: The government of pro-US secular moderate Prime Minister Mehdi Bazargan collapsed. Ayatullah Imam Khomeini demonized the US as "the Great Satan" while its strong ally in the Middle East—Israel—as "Little Satan."
- November 14, 1979: The US government instructed its officials to freeze all Iranian assets and deposits held in US banks and in the branches of US banks overseas, between \$7 and \$8 billion.
- April 7, 1980: The US broke diplomatic relations with Iran.
- April 24-25, 1980: The US conducted an abortive military rescue mission code-named "Operation Eagle Claw" to free 52 American hostages from Iran. After the failure of US rescue mission Khomeini boastfully stated that 'America cannot do a damn thing'.
- July 15, 1980: Iran officially severed diplomatic relationship with the US.
- January 19, 1981: Through Algerian intermediaries Iran and the US settled the hostage issue.
- January 19, 1984: Washington designated Iran as a "state-sponsor of terrorism," and strongly advocated for shutting down Iran's access to arms by imposing a world-wide arms embargo by the name of "Operation Staunch" on Iran.
- August 6, 1985: President Reagan authorized a covert programme to provide weapons, funneled through Israel to US enemy state Iran. After the revelation of the arms engagement on November 3, 1986, it became known as Iran-Contra affair.
- July 3, 1988: The US Navy shot down Iranian civilian airliner Iran Air Flight 655 and killed 290 passengers which eventually terminated the eight-year long war.
- March 6, 1995: Iran offered a \$1 billion deal to a subsidiary of the US oil concern *Conoco*, however, influenced by Israel the US rejected the offer.

- December 31, 1995: The Congress passed a secret intelligence authorization act which included \$20 million earmarked for covert action against the Tehran regime.
- December 14, 1997: Iran's President Khatami first proposed a thoughtful dialogue with the American people which later became known as "Dialogue among Civilizations".
- January 7, 1998: During his CNN interview with noted Iranian-born CNN correspondent Christiane Amanpour, Khatami paid a tribute to American people and formally advocated rapprochement between Iran and the US.
- January 1998: President Clinton in a videotaped message addressed the Iranian people on the holy Eid al-Fitr—the Muslim Festival celebrated after the holy month of Ramadan in fasting.
- March 17, 2000: US Secretary of State Madeleine Albright made a ground-breaking speech before the American-Iranian Council (AIC), a group promoting better relations between Iran and the US, confessing of previous American misdeeds on Iran.
- October 2001: Iran offered crucial assistance to the US when the latter conducted "Operation Enduring Freedom" against the Taliban regime and al-Qaeda in Afghanistan.
- January 29, 2002: President George W. Bush made his "Axis of Evil" speech wherein Iran was included as a member of axis of evil with Iraq and North Korea.
- May 2003: Iran's President Khatami sent a letter to the US which became known as the grand bargain letter in the history of Iran-US relations.
- February 2006: The then Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice asked the Congress to provide \$75 million in emergency fund regime change and push for "democracy" in Iran.
- 2007: The Bush administration provided \$420 million for operations to destabilize Iran and to bring about regime change there.
- May 2009: President Obama sent a letter to Iran's Supreme Leader Ali Khamenei. Iran showed its full preparedness to talk with the US over nuclear issue.
- October 1, 2009: Iran and the US met in Geneva for talks over Iran's nuclear issue which was the most substantive bilateral contact between the two countries for 30 years.
- March 20, 2010: On the eve of the Iranian New Year, President Obama greeted the Iranian people and renewed the dialogue offer.
- December 4, 2011: Iranian armed forces had downed a US Lockheed Martin RQ-170 Sentinel unmanned aerial vehicle commonly known as drone.
- August 19, 2013: Exactly 60 years after the CIA-orchestrated 1953 coup d'état that toppled Iran's democratic and nationalist Prime Minister Mohammad Mosaddeq, the US government recognized that the CIA was behind the coup.
- September 27, 2013: President Obama and President Rouhani spoke on the phone which was the first such conversation since 1979.
- July 14, 2015: Iran and P5+1 concluded a historic nuclear deal officially known as the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA) which eased the Iran-US tensions considerably.
- On January 16, 2016: The IAEA reported to the UNSC that Iran had completed necessary preparatory steps to start the implementation of the JCPOA. On the same day, Secretary of State John Kerry signed off on paperwork granting Iran sanctions relief following the UN nuclear watchdog verified that Iran had fulfilled its obligations to dismantle the bulk of its nuclear programme under the historic July 2015 nuclear deal.
- January 17, 2016: The UNSC announced that it has removed all restrictions put against Iran since 2006. Simultaneously, the US and the EU also lifted the sanctions that were imposed on Iran over the past decades, although Washington imposed some new sanctions on Iran.
- June 14, 2017: US Secretary of State Rex Tillerson told that Washington's policy toward Tehran was based on regime change.
- May 20-21, 2017: During his visit to Saudi Arabia President Donald Trump made a speech blaming Iran for regional instability.
- July 28, 2017: The US imposed new sanctions on Iran targeting its missile programme.

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